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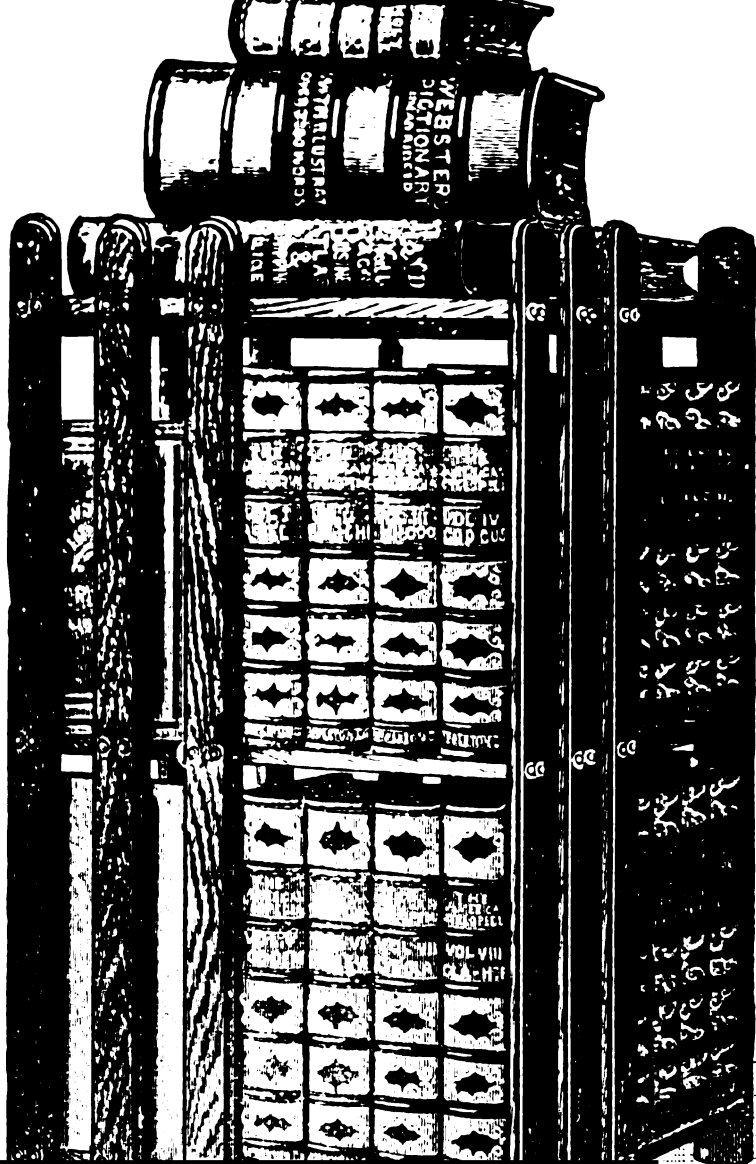
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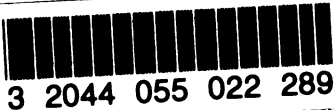
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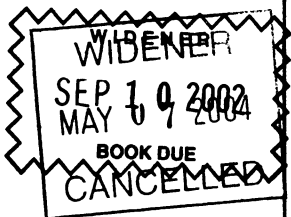
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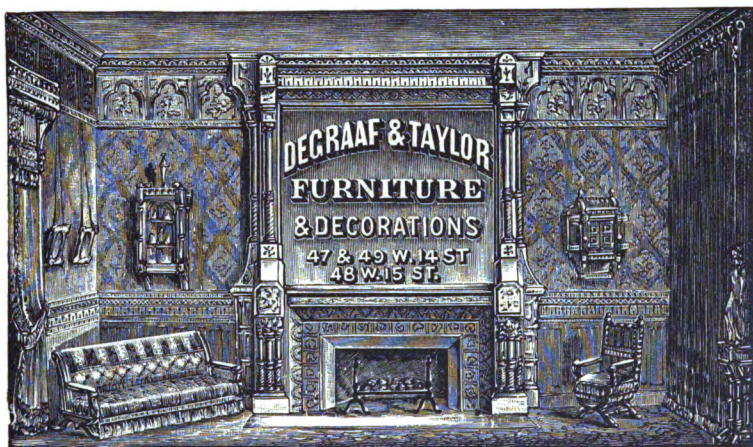
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THE HOME LIBRARY.

I.

A PLEA FOR THE BEST BOOKS.

ONE library differs from another library just as one book differs from another book. The "Franklin Square Library" is a wholly different affair from the Bloomsbury Square Library, perhaps better known to fame as the British Museum. The library of the late Mr. Lenox, which he gave more or less to the citizens of New York, and which has hundreds of Bibles, old and new, in all tongues, bears but little resemblance to the library of a certain free-thinking and free-living gentleman in Paris, who does not own a single book that the Society for the Suppression of Vice would not seize with avidity and destroy with alacrity. There was even an Englishman whose taste was akin both to the late Mr. Lenox's and to the unnamed Parisian collector; and of this copious library of Lord Guilford his sister, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, used to say, aptly enough, that "Frederick's library

contains but two sorts of books—books that can not be read, and books that ought not to be read !”

All three of these libraries differ greatly from one which Mr. Thackeray mentions somewhere in one of his stirring romances—at least we think it was the author of that gay military novel, “Vanity Fair,” who introduces us to a young gentleman whose library “consisted principally of old boots.” Of course, this last is an extreme case of biblio-poverty, yet it is not quite as extreme as it may seem at first glance. Anecdotes are not wanting to show that to many people boots are as fitting furniture for a library as books. A New York paper recently told a story of an enriched couple who were about to decorate their new mansion in the highest style of the latest art, and who, therefore, went about seeking hints that they might devour and digest to their own profit. Among the houses which they got leave to examine was the home of a prominent publisher ; and the sight of the library therein was suggestive to the lady, for she turned to her lord with the pertinent query, “Don’t you think we might have some books, too.”

Right in the middle of one of the most bookish quarters in New York, right under the shadow of the Astor and the Mercantile Libraries, close to the treasuries of old books guarded by Bouton and Scribner, in Broadway just by Astor Place, a store not long ago was occupied by a “book-butcher” ; it was some sort of a literary “dollar-store.” Beneath the flaming and incendiary placards which offered a million volumes within, for a mere song, and on an improvised stand in the

street itself, were a hundred or more copies of a bulky and gaudily bound book. Curiosity urged me to discover what book it was which was thus selling off regardless of cost. It proved to be a tawdry subscription book—a biography of General Grant, supplemented by an account of his travels, and lavishly illustrated in the usual style. It had originally been published at three or four dollars a copy, and now it was offered at ninety-five cents! Nay, more; by way of adding insult to injury, the poor tomes were surmounted by a fiery placard, which besought the passer-by to purchase this great work for the small sum of ninety-five cents, adding—with all the dignity of small-caps—that it was “WORTH MORE THAN THIS PRICE JUST TO FILL UP THE BOOK-CASE.”

Now, between the gentleman who buys a book just to fill up his book-case and the gentleman whose library consisted mainly of old boots, there is no great difference. That there is some small difference, however, it is but fair to admit. Perhaps the boot-librarian may be taken as the lowest form, and the buyer of books just to fill up as the next lowest. Immediately above this last would come the person who likes to read—now and then—but who judges the book he is reading more by the outside than the inside. At a watering-place not far from Philadelphia, a year or two ago, a lady of literary taste, and, indeed, of a literary family, was besought by one of the tribe of summer boarders to lend a book or two. The lady of literary taste had brought no books with her on her journey, but had from time to time bought odd numbers of one of the omnipresent pamphlet

“libraries.” From these she selected novels by Scott, Thackeray, Cooper, and George Eliot, and lent them to the summer boarder. Time passed on, and at last the summer boarder brought the books back, and, in response to a question, declared that she had “liked them very much—yes, pretty well—pretty well—but then, you see, I think I like bound books best !”

“It is nearly an axiom,” says Bishop Potter, “that people will not be better than the books they read.” And it is almost as much of an axiom that they will judge people much as they judge books. If, therefore, they estimate a book by its binding, they are likely to value a man by his clothing. The outside of a book is the least important part of it. A good book is good by reason of its soul, of its inner light and heat. Its external attire may be gay and gaudy, or sad and somber ; it may be bright and fresh, or old and worn. It is the inside alone which is of importance. The hapless man who values books by the outsides has no books in his house save a few gilt and glittering gift-books and a few feeble religious books, and perhaps a patent-medicine almanac and a dream-book or two ; and it is pitiful to think what a sad old age he is preparing for himself. The man who values books for themselves, for what they are, for what they teach, for what they mean to him, may have no more volumes than the other ; but his Shakespeare and his Molière, his Homer and his Horace, his Scott and his Cooper, his Montaigne and his Emerson, old and battered and faded and shorn as they may be of any early beauty they may have had, are to him more precious than jewels.

There is no treasure in this life below like a great love for books, for they are safe guides in youth and a solace in age. A book is your best companion at all times and in all places. In choosing a book, as in choosing a dictionary, we ought to follow the advice of the advertisements and Get the Best. For ourselves and for our children we ought always to seek to form a taste for the best and a distaste for the bad. Charles Kemble and his wife were very particular in the artistic education of their children; and their daughter, Frances Anne Kemble, actress, essayist, and poet, thus expresses her heartfelt thanks for this care:

“Nor can I ever be too grateful that, restricted as were my parents’ means of developing in us the highest culture, they were still such as, combined with their own excellent taste and judgment, preserved us from that which is far worse than ignorance—a liking for anything vulgar or trivial. That which was merely pretty in music, painting, or poetry, was never placed on the same level in our admiration with that which was fine, and though from nature as well as training we enjoyed with great zest everything that could in any sense be called good, our enthusiasm was always reserved for that which was best—an incalculable advantage in the formation of a fine taste and critical judgment.”

And Schopenhauer declaims on the “paramount importance of acquiring the art *not* to read”; in other words, of not reading such books as make a great noise in the world for a little while, and reach several edi-

tions in the first year of their existence, which often is also the last. "We should recollect that he who writes for fools finds an enormous audience, and we should devote the ever-scant leisure of our circumscribed existence to the master spirits of all ages and nations—those who tower over humanity, and whom the voice of Fame proclaims; only such writers cultivate and instruct us. Of bad books we can never read too little; of the good, never too much. The bad are intellectual poison, and undermine the understanding."

And he goes on to insist on the need of reading the best books written for all time, and not the accidental and ephemeral successes of the moment. This advice resolves itself into the dictum that in literature as in life we should keep the best company we can. Life is short and libraries are big; and precious time is lost in reading feeble writing, which unfits us for stronger food. The genial Emerson's advice is closely akin to that of the bitter Schopenhauer. Emerson's three rules are—

1. Never read any book that is not a year old.
2. Never read any but famed books.
3. Never read any books but what you like.

That these were sound rules for Emerson himself we need not doubt, but they are a little too rigid and restricting for most of us. Mr. F. B. Perkins, in his suggestive notes on "Courses of Reading," suggests that Emerson's rules would be perfect if we add to each the clause, "unless you choose." It is Mr. Perkins, also, who has brought to light another set of three rules for reading, which Professor Whitaker, of Cambridge, gave

to John Boyce, one of the translators of King James's Bible. They apply rather to the methods of reading than to the subject:

1. Study, chiefly, standing or walking.
2. Never study at a window.
3. Never go to bed with cold feet.

The advice of Goethe is the advice of Emerson and of Schopenhauer. "Do not read your fellow-strivers, your fellow-workers," said Goethe. And Mr. Matthew Arnold adds: "Of the contemporary rubbish which is shot so plentifully around us, we can, indeed, hardly read too little."

Now, this is no doubt true, when applied to the man of letters, to the man of the highest culture. But it is a hard saying for the man or woman who seeks in books temporary rest and relief after the toil and harass and stress of daily life. Most of us have not the high and cultivated taste which finds more enjoyment in Homer, or Dante, or Milton, than in a light and lively tale of to-day. And for most of us, therefore, the advice of Goethe, Emerson, Schopenhauer, and Mr. Arnold is too severe, and must needs be broadened and brightened. Yet there can be no doubt that they are right in the main, and that, the nearer we come to the attainment of this ideal, the better it will be for us.

The man who has grasped the inner beauty of the great Greek poets has laid hold of a noble thing. Reading is a great part of education, and, as Mr. Matthew Arnold says, "what a man seeks through his education is to get to know himself and the world; next, that

for this knowledge it is before all things necessary that he acquaint himself with the best which has been thought and said in the world; finally, that of this *best* the classics of Greece and Rome form a very chief portion, and the portion most entirely satisfactory."

Mr. Arnold is careful to claim no more than that the classics of Greek and Rome are a chief portion of what is best. There are other classics also—Italian and French, English and American. "*Robinson Crusoe*" is as genuine a classic as "*Paradise Lost*." Homer, Dante and Goethe are classics truly, but they are not more truly classic than Benjamin Franklin, Walter Scott, or Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. "A classic," says Lowell, "is properly a book which maintains itself by virtue of that happy coalescence of matter and style, that innate and exquisite sympathy between the thought that gives life and the form which consents to every mood of grace and dignity, which can be simple without being vulgar, elevated without being distant, and which is something neither ancient nor modern, always new, and incapable of growing old." A taste for the classics thus described is a gift to be thankful for; and it is a reward to be won by thought, labor, and time.

II.

ON THE BUYING AND OWNING OF BOOKS.

"It seemed to me," says Edward A. Freeman, recording his impressions of this country, "that in America the reading class, the class of those who read widely, who read as far as they go intelligently, but who do not read deeply—those who, without being professed scholars, read enough and know enough to be quite worth talking to—form a larger proportion than in England. On the other hand, the class of those who read really deeply, the professed scholars, is certainly much smaller in proportion in America than it is in England. The class exists; it numbers some who have done thoroughly good work, and others from whom thoroughly good work may be looked for; but it sometimes fails to show itself where one might most have expected to find it."

That is to say, that while the class of professed scholars engaged in original research is narrowly limited, the class of general readers is a very large class, much larger than it is in England. What Mr. Freeman did not add is, that in England the general reader borrows his books from a circulating library, while in America he owns them. An eminent English mathematician once told

me that the thing which most surprised him when he arrived in this country was to hear two young ladies say they had been into town to buy some books. "To buy some books!" he repeated, in astonishment; "in England nobody buys a book." This assertion is, perhaps, not mathematically exact, but it may serve to mark the difference between the two sets of readers of the one language. Mr. Lang, in his delightful book on "The Library," reveals his English limitations at once when he speaks of books being "the rarest of possessions in many houses. There are relics of the age before circulating libraries; there are fragments of the lettered store of some scholarly great-grandfather, and these, with a few odd numbers of magazines, a few primers and manuals, some sermons and novels, make up the ordinary library of a British household." No doubt but the ordinary library of an American household is not like this; or, rather, it has more than these. Instead of the heir-looms from a great-grandfather—which, in America, have got themselves lost in successive removals—there are, perhaps, a few Patent Office Reports and other Pub. Docs. Then there are other things also: there is some attempt at harmony; there is an intention, at least, of selection and symmetry; there is a greater coherence. We do not often inherit books here, and we are too widely scattered to use the circulating library as our English cousins can; and so we have to buy books. As we have but limited means, most of us, we have to be careful in our choice, although the wily and insinuating book-peddler sometimes coaxes us into

subscribing for some "Monumental Work on the Manners and Customs of the American Mosquito," Beautifully Illustrated, and to be issued in only Sixty-four Parts at Fifty Cents a Part. But then he does not take us in twice—at least not with the same book.

There is something to be said in favor of the English system of borrowing books—but not much. A book that is really worth reading is worth owning. A book that has benefited you while reading ought to be within reach immediately whenever you want to refer to it again. It is all well enough to rely on the circulating library or the book-club for the book of the day, the novel which has made an accidental hit, or the sensational book of travels. But it is best to own all really good books, that we may have them at hand whenever we need them. It is well every year to lay aside a certain fixed sum to be spent in books. No other portion of our annual expenditure will yield such high returns.

After the Bible, the most important book in a library, and the first to be bought, is a dictionary. There is little to choose between Webster and Worcester. In the end, the Unabridged is cheaper than the shorter editions, because of the mass of other than merely philological information which it contains. In reality, the Unabridged American Dictionary is a sort of condensed encyclopædia. The smaller dictionaries are more easily handled, and may, therefore, be more readily consulted. The new Century Dictionary, revised by Professor W. D. Whitney, will appear in four volumes, and, although as full as the Unabridged Webster or Worcester, its separate volumes will



be much handier. It is well to have the Unabridged, improved by Denison's Economy Index (Fig. 1). It is

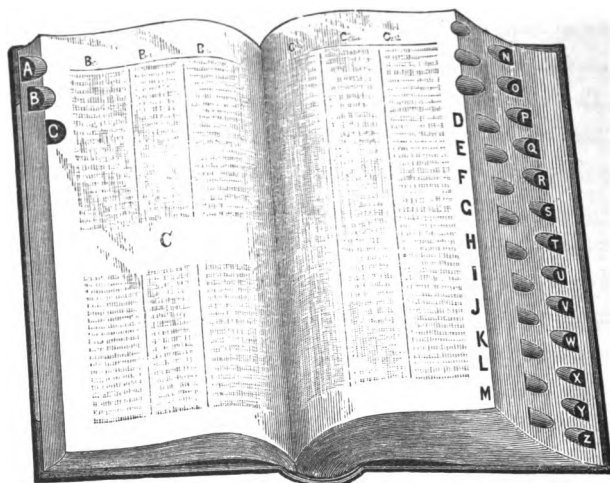


FIG. 1.

well to keep it mounted on the light wire dictionary-holder (Figs. 2 and 3), which makes it easy to carry from room to room, and easy to consult, as it needs no sub-



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.

stantial table to support it. The marginal index very greatly facilitates the finding of the needed word.

After the dictionary should come a really good atlas. Americans have a great natural fondness for geography, and a good set of maps may be made a source of unending amusement and instruction for young and old during the long winter evenings. The best collections of maps are made in Germany, and are, perhaps, too expensive for most people. But, if it can be afforded, Stieler's Hand-Atlas should be in every house where there are children, or where the grown folks take an intelligent interest in the doings of the world.

An encyclopædia is next in importance to an atlas—may even serve as a substitute for it, if you are careful to get an encyclopædia with a full set of maps. It may be said that the maps in both “Appletons’ American Cyclopædia” and in the new “Encyclopædia Britannica” are better than those to be found in any of the ordinary atlases; and, therefore, the purchase of either of these cyclopædias makes it needless to buy an atlas also. In choosing an encyclopædia, the purchaser must carefully consider the amount of money which he can afford to spend, and the amount of space on his shelves which he can afford to give. The most elaborate and expensive publication now in the market is the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” which is now (1883) about half finished, and will not be completed for three or four years more. Its treatment of American topics is meager, and it excludes all living celebrities; yet it is an invaluable treasure for those who can afford to purchase it and also the other books needed to supply its deficiencies. “Appletons’ American Cyclopædia” is complete in sixteen volumes;

it can be bought and paid for in installments; it contains excellent maps; it is amply illustrated; it is very full on American topics; and it considers living celebrities. Where an American can purchase only one cyclopædia, beyond all doubt he ought to buy a cyclopædia prepared in America for Americans. And this reminds us that a book of reference is usually a great deal better for being American. It is not that American workmanship is necessarily better than foreign; it is because the horizon of the American compiler is wider. French books are likely to be exhaustive on French topics and on antiquity, and lamentably weak elsewhere. English book-makers are rigidly insular. The American editor not only includes American topics because he needs must; but he has perforce to include English topics likewise, since the history of England is also a part of our heritage; and he is likely to consider both French and German topics as only a little less necessary than English; and thus the book gets a completeness lacking in either French or English works, while the vivacity of the American saves his work from the exhausting exhaustiveness of the German's. Smaller than "Appletons' American Cyclopædia" is Johnson's, which is complete in four ponderous volumes. There is also an American revision of "Chambers's Encyclopædia" in ten volumes.

After the dictionary and the cyclopædia, there are other books of reference very useful, but not absolutely indispensable. Chief among them are Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates" (of which there is an American revision); Bartlett's "Dictionary of Familiar Quotations" (a model

work); Cruden's "Concordance" (the best help to Bible-reading); Mary Cowden Clarke's "Concordance to Shakespeare"; Wheeler's "Noted Names of Fiction," and "Familiar Allusions"; Soule's "English Synonyms"; Adams's "Dictionary of English Literature," and Brewer's "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" (both British works, with well-meaning but futile efforts to do justice to American subjects); Hole and Wheeler's "Brief Biographies"; Lippincott's "Gazetteer"; Thomas's "Biographical Dictionary"; and Walford's "Men of the Time," a dictionary of contemporary biography, fair for English celebrities, feeble for other foreigners, and wretched for Americans. For those who can afford it, Vapereau's "Dictionnaire des Contemporains" in French is the best book on living celebrities; and Larousse's "Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIX^e Siècle," an enormous work in sixteen enormous volumes, is the fullest cyclopædia on all but English and American topics. For a family speaking French, and able to stand the expense, the best two cyclopædias would be Appletons' for English and American subjects, maps, and illustrations, and Larousse's for foreign and classic subjects. Champlin's "Young Folks' Cyclopædia of Common Things" is an excellent book for children; it is clear and simple, and so well-arranged that a child has no difficulty in learning to use it as soon as he has learned to read: and the use of reference-books can not be acquired too soon.

Of these various books of reference the dictionary is the one absolutely essential. It is the one book no gentleman's library should be without. And no gentleman's

library should be without as many of the other books of reference as he can, after due consideration, afford to purchase. In general, it may be said that the farther he lives from a public library, the more remote and isolated his residence, the more books of reference he needs. Strictly speaking, books of reference are not intended to be read; they are for consultation only—although there is very fascinating reading to be got out of a dictionary, and even out of a gazetteer. Now we come to the books specifically and unequivocally intended to be read.

First among these is a complete Shakespeare; next is a good history of the United States—Bancroft's or Hildreth's, if you can afford them; Higginson's or Doyle's if you must have a cheap single volume. Next, again, is a volume of selected poetry. Dana's "Household Book of Poetry" is, perhaps, the best, all things considered. Fourth should come a history of England; and there can be but little doubt that Green's is the best for the general reader. For the young, perhaps Dickens's "Child's History of England" is better, but Green can be easily digested by an intelligent and inquiring child. In the fifth place may come a history of English literature, either ample and philosophic, like Taine's brilliant and suggestive work, or brief and pointed, like Stopford Brooke's.

Here we are come to the end of the list of books suited to nearly all sorts and conditions of men. Any man, woman, or child may find amusement and instruction in the books already named. In extending the catalogue,

however, individual tastes must be consulted. As the reader's predilections run to history, or literature, or science, so must the list of books vary. All that can be done is to advise the reader where to go to get the names of the books he may want, and where he may learn about their worth. There are many guides which profess to help the chance reader. Some are good, and most are not.

Bishop Potter's "Hand-book for Students and Readers," and President Porter's "Books and Reading," are both excellent books. They are rather more treatises for the student than guides for those about to begin a library. The last edition (1882) of President Porter's volume has a classified list of the best books drawn up by Mr. J. M. Hubbard, of the Boston Public Library. Better than either is Mr. F. B. Perkins's little volume on "The Best Reading," which contains not only general remarks on what to read and how to read it, accompanied by much shrewd practical advice, but also classified and annotated lists of books in all departments of literature. A supplementary volume, prepared by Mr. Lynds E. Jones, brings the work down to 1883. With these two volumes as a guide, the purchaser of books can not go far wrong. Other books attempting the same task, and in great measure covering the same ground as the volumes of Bishop Potter, President Porter, and Mr. Perkins, are Mr. G. A. F. Van Rhyn's "What and How to Read," Mr. William E. Foster's "Libraries and Readers," Prof. Richardson's "Choice of Books," Mr. S. S. Green's "Libraries and Schools," and the "Hints for Home Reading," edited by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

It is a good thing, also, to consult the later catalogues of leading American libraries. In some of these there are very elaborate notes describing the special qualities of the various books in each department. The catalogue of the Quincy Public Library, for instance, contains long notes on English history prepared chiefly by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Jr. There are lists of books on special topics published by the Boston Public Library, the Providence Public Library, and the Brooklyn Mercantile Library, either separately, or as part of the regular catalogue of the library. A very handy little volume, called "Books for all Time," contains a list of the chief authors, with brief and suggestive criticisms, and the names of their most important works. Except that there is, perhaps, too heavy a proportion of American names in this list, and a little too light a proportion of the great Frenchmen, Italians, and Germans, there is scarcely a fault to find with it. The same publisher (F. Leypoldt, New York) has issued another little pamphlet volume even more invaluable—"Books for the Young," a guide for parents and children, compiled by Miss C. M. Hewins, the Librarian of the Hartford Library Association. Miss Hewins has been singularly successful in interesting the younger readers of Hartford in better books than they had been wont to take out of the library. Her prefatory remarks are full of common sense. Her advice on "How to Teach the Right Use of Books" to children is apt and pertinent, and can not be too closely adhered to by any careful parent who remembers that a child's reading is the most important part of his education, and

that it is what he reads for himself with pleasure, rather than what he may study at school as a task, which will give the bent to his future life. Especially to be commended is Miss Hewins's note on English and American history for children, and on the means by which they may be led to take a living interest in the story of their own people.

There are many other books about books which the general reader, or the man who is beginning to form a library, will find useful. There is Dr. Allibone's exhaustive "Dictionary of English Literature," containing biographical sketches of all who have written in English, with full lists of their works, and abundant extracts of criticism thereon. There is Bohn's revision of Lowndes's "Bibliographer's Manual," a classified list of the best editions of all English writers, now a little old-fashioned and out of date. For those who are bitten by the taste for the curiosities and rarities of literature, who are seized with the liking for books as books independent of their contents, for those who are learned in editions and conditions and bindings and book-plates, there are many special treatises, two of which are particularly to be singled out for their genuine literary charm. The first is "The Bookhunter" of the late John Hill Burton, and the second is "The Library," by Mr. Andrew Lang, which includes a chapter on "English Illustrated Books" by Mr. Austin Dobson. Mr. Lang's volume is one of the "Art at Home" series, and is, therefore, devoted rather to the elegances of the library than to its practical use. But it is a charmingly written plea for bibliomania, full

of recondite learning, lightly carried, and pleasantly set forth. Also to be commended is "A Handy Book about Books," by Mr. John Power, addressed to all those who are fond of books for their own sake. Mr. Power's book contains many practical hints on the care and keeping of books. The present writer takes pleasure in recording here his indebtedness both to Mr. Lang and to Mr. Power.

Mr. Perkins concludes his remarks on the duty of buying books with two incisive sayings:

1. Own all the books you can.
2. Use all the books you own—and as many more as you can get.

There is twice the satisfaction to be got out of a book you own than is to be got out of a book only borrowed. If you own a book, you can read it at will, as fast as you please, as slowly as you please, as often as you please; you can think about and talk about and put your hand at once on the passage you approve of; you can even lend it to the man who disagrees with you, and so crush him completely and convert him ultimately. There is pure enjoyment in the possession of a good book. Remember how Charles Lamb used to be hungry for an old folio play until at last he could resist no longer, and he and Mary had to pinch to pay for the fearful joy. Charles Lamb and his sister thought, with Alonzo of Arragon, that there is nothing equal to

"Old wood to burn! Old wine to drink!
Old friends to trust! Old books to read!"

Of all old friends, old books are surely the best. But old books are like old friends in that they must have been new once; and the friendship is all the stronger if both parties have grown old together.

It is not easy to advise exactly as to the best way of buying books, since so much depends on circumstance and situation. In general, it is best to make a friend of the most active and intelligent bookseller within reach. Decide on the sum you can afford to spend this year. Make out a list of the books you want. Take this to the bookseller and ask him to get you the books, and to allow you a fair discount proportionate to the size of the order. After these books have come, keep on good terms with the bookseller. Form the habit of dropping into his store now and again to see what he has likely to suit you. Lay aside a fixed sum annually to be spent in books. Consult with the bookseller as to the best means of laying this out to advantage. Remember that in general it is best to deal directly and regularly with an established bookseller. Beware of the itinerant book-peddler; most of his books are made to sell, and are not worth reading. Beware of the canvassing agent, unless he represents a reputable house. Never buy at auction unless you have had an opportunity previously to examine the goods to see that they have no defects, and are in every way in good condition. Remember that the highest-priced books are not necessarily the best, or the lowest-priced necessarily the cheapest. Choose good type, and good paper, and good ink, even if they cost a little more; it is false economy to spare the pocket and spoil the eyes. A book

that is worth buying at all is worth buying in good condition and in a good edition. When in doubt between two editions of the same standard book, choose that which has the fullest index.

In buying second-hand books—and many, if not most, standard works can best be had second-hand from a dealer in old books—it costs but little more to get a copy well bound in morocco, in half-roan, or even in half-calf. A second-hand book sells on its own merits independent of its binding, and by biding your time and looking about you can generally pick up a neatly-bound copy for the price you would pay for a copy in cloth or in boards.

III.

ON READING.

MR. EDWARD EVERETT HALE tells us that he once knew a young man, who afterward became insane, who was so impressed with his own ignorance that he went to the college librarian and asked him at which end of the library it was customary for students to begin. And Mr. Charles Dudley Warner tells us that a college professor not long ago informed him "that a freshman came to him, after he had been recommending certain books in the literature class, and said he had never read a book in his life. This was literally true. Except his textbooks, he had never read a book. He had passed a fair examination, but of reading he knew no more than a Kaffir."

The first thing one notices is that very few people read, in the exact sense of the word. "Reading and writing come by nature" is as true of the one as it is of the other; and while an enormous proportion of the people of these United States are capable of the physical act of reading, and do, indeed, practice it now and then, so far as to read the market reports or the deaths and marriages, only a few are habitual readers. And even of these, how many are there who read anything besides

cheap fiction—cheap, I mean, in quality—the ready-made literature turned out by the fiction-mills? In the public libraries, seventy per cent. of the books taken out in the course of a year are cheap fiction; and the cheap fiction which gets itself between the covers of a book and upon the shelves of a library is not one half of that which runs its course in the columns of some weekly story-paper. One of these papers advertises that its circulation is more than a third of a million copies a week; and, if every copy is read by three persons, this means that the stories in this paper are read by a million people a week. Now, there are always five, six, or seven continued tales in each number, besides shorter stories, verse, moral essays, and the like. To read the weekly number through would take all the spare time of any one who had to work for his or her living—and who has not? So here is a fiftieth part of the people of these United States, celebrated for their school system, giving all their reading hours to the trash published by one paper; and there are a dozen other papers like unto this. Now, it is not right to call the consumers of stuff like this readers. Charles Lamb speaks of books which are not books, so these are readers who are not readers. They read with the eye alone, while the brain is inert.

This class is far harder to deal with than the still larger class which, like the collegians Mr. Hale and Mr. Warner tell us about, have never made any use of the power of reading which was hammered into them in the primary school. The man who has rarely opened a book may be induced to do so; and he may be so gratified

with his discovery of the pleasure and profit which he finds in reading that he will never give it up. There is a well-known story of a man who, after a very slight schooling, had been obliged to earn his own living; he was possessed of the combination of powers which make for success, and he gained a large fortune in California before he was forty. He built him a fine house, in which the architect put a "library," so the owner sent a five-thousand-dollar check East to a bookseller for books to fill it. The books went to California, and the new millionaire, having now time on his hands, took to reading. A few months later he wrote East to the bookseller, saying that the books he had sent were thoroughly satisfactory, especially the plays of a man called Shakespeare. He had enjoyed these very much. They were the real thing, and, if this Shakespeare wrote anything more, please forward it to him at once by express, C. O. D. This story, which I have seen cited as characteristic stupidity on the part of a self-made man, strikes me, on the contrary, as highly to his credit. That he, without any literary culture whatever, should be able to appreciate Shakespeare's work, in spite of the archaisms and other things which tend to veil its beauty and its strength from us, is as good proof of his native intelligence as one could wish. If that man had spent his spare time reading cheap fiction, in all probability he would never have made his fortune; and of a certainty he would never have been able to enjoy Shakespeare if his appreciation of what is good had been lowered by trash.

Readers of trash and nothing else, and the readers of

nothing at all—save, perhaps, the probabilities in the morning papers—may well be classed together. And, as I have said, the second class is easier to interest than the first. Unfortunately for the present writer, those who don't read are not likely to read this, and are thus deprived of much good advice. Still, the good advice shall be given in the hope that those who have need of it may get it second-hand. Those who do not read can only be got to read by giving them something which will interest them sufficiently to make them want to read it through when they have once begun. And what will interest a man depends altogether on the man. In literature, as in dietetics, what is one man's meat is another man's poison. One thing may be said most emphatically: never give any "improving books" to a man who does not read; to do so is to waste your effort and his. When the reading habit is once formed you may, perhaps, get him interested in a tract or in a religious biography of the ordinary Sunday-school type. But no such book will ever tempt him to go on reading for its own sake.

The rule is simple: study the man or the woman or the child, and put before him or her the book he or she is most likely to begin, and, having begun, most likely to finish. The California millionaire, having a knowledge of men and things, could at once take delight in Shakespeare. In all probability, the firemen around the corner, whose little library you are trying to increase and improve, will not take so kindly to Shakespeare; but Tom Hughes's "Alfred the Great," and Higginson's "Young Folks' History of America"—the best little book of its

kind I ever saw—and Nordhof's "Politics for Young Americans," and a good collection of miscellaneous poems—these are the books they are likely to look at, and, in all probability, to read. You can not cure a boy of reading the "Bold Brigand of the Dead Gulch" by giving him the "Student's Hume"—one of the driest books which ever made a boy thirsty—or any of the ordinary old-fashioned text-books of history. But you might get him to give up "Lone-eyed Jim, the Boy Scout," to read one of Mayne Reid's stories; and from those the transition is easy to the sea-tales of Cooper and Marryat—two salt-water romancers far healthier than most of the rose-water novelists of to-day. And after you have got the boy interested in these sea-fighters of fiction, let him have Southey's "Life of Nelson," a good biography of Paul Jones, and, if the size of it does not frighten him, Cooper's "History of the American Navy."

The one essential thing to do, when you are trying to change a man who does not read into a man who does read, is to put yourself in his place. What is his business? What are his tastes? What are his surroundings? The answers to these questions suggest the weak points in his indifference. If he is an artisan who gives his evenings to the reading of a weekly story-paper, and so has the freshness taken out of his mind by its cheap fiction, suggest his trying Charles Reade's "Put Yourself in His Place"; and if this story of strikes interests him, lend him Reade's other novels, most of which are so manly, and touch so closely on questions of history and politics, that the reader is tempted to learn more about

what the novelist has thus enticingly alluded to. If a lady has a strong taste for going to the theatre, suggest her reading Dr. Doran's "Their Majesties' Servants"—the most amusing as it is the most authoritative of stage-histories—and insist on her reading Lewes's "Actors and Acting," the one good book on a difficult subject. If she like these, then she may begin on the grand line of English histrionic biographies which begins with Colley Cibber's "Apology" and comes down to Macready's "Reminiscences."

While there are many persons who have either read nothing but trash or else read nothing at all, there is a large class who already love reading, and yet are not quite sure what to read, or how to get the greatest advantage from their reading. The best suggestion I can give to such is: Read what you want. If you have a taste for reading, and are forming a habit of reading, you may be trusted to read what you want. By this I do not mean to read odds and ends, and all sorts of books—good, bad, and indifferent. Far from it. I mean that you should find out what you want to read, find out what you want to know about, find out what subjects most interest you—and then, when you have found out, read the best books on this subject.

Don't lay out a course of reading, or, if you do, rest assured that before it is finished you will be laid out. A course of reading is like an encyclopædia; it is meant to take in everything. Now, anybody who believes that he can take in everything will be taken in himself. The mass of accumulated knowledge is now enormous, and

to take even a cursory view of it all is only possible for a very well-educated man. To know something of everything is getting, day by day, to be a harder task. But to know almost everything about something is more nearly within everybody's reach. To know absolutely everything on a given subject is not possible even to the specialist, but to get a good grasp of a subject, be it scientific, or historical, or literary, to know what is best worth knowing about it—this can be done by almost anybody with good will and a little perseverance. And what a gain it is when you once have it! What a satisfaction it is to feel that of one subject, at least, you are master! Other people may know more of other things, but, if they once come on your ground, you are at home, and can receive them with easy hospitality. The mastery of one subject is the basis of culture. Besides knowing how much there is to know on any subject, measuring the depth of your own ignorance is a very wholesome mental discipline, and tends to make you listen more attentively to others on subjects which you know them to have studied. (Incidentally it is to be said that a due appreciation of the value of the opinion of specialists is a need in this country—as the greenback craze goes to show.)

Now, the way to master a subject is to begin at the beginning. Suppose you want to know about Greek literature. You have noted one of Macaulay's or Matthew Arnold's glowing tributes to the noble simplicity of Grecian writing, and you want to read about it. Get Jebb's "*Primer of Greek Literature*," which is almost

as good as Stopford Brooke's "Primer of English Literature"—as high praise as one can give any book of the kind. This will tell you the conditions under which the Greeks worked. Then if you are attracted toward any other writer, and want to know more about him, get the volume in which he and his works are discussed at length in the series of "Ancient Classics for English Readers." By the time you have read that, you will know whether you really want to study this Greek author or not, whether you are capable of appreciating him, and, therefore, whether your time and attention can be given to him to advantage.

The one thing young readers need most to be warned against is the reading of standard classics which they do not appreciate, which they do not like, and which they are really bored by. If you can not appreciate a great author, if he tires you, if he does not interest you, put him down and begin again more humbly. In time, if you keep on cultivating your taste, you can take him up again with a greater hope of success. If you can not read "Paradise Lost" with enjoyment, while you can enjoy "Beautiful Snow," do not try to read "Paradise Lost" just yet. Try the works of other old poets; perhaps you may find something which you do like as well as "Beautiful Snow." You may rest assured that it will be better.

As soon as the taste for reading is formed, that taste begins to improve, and its improvement should be sedulously cultivated. Every man who has read a great deal will tell you that he has left far behind him the books

he admired when he began. What he admired at twenty is far inferior to what he admires at thirty or forty. He is constantly going up a literary ladder. Now, it makes little matter on what round of the ladder the reader begins, so long as he climbs. It is the act of climbing which is beneficial, not the elevation attained. If you are a boy, and you read for excitement, for adventure, and for this reason take a story-paper, give it up, and try one of Mr. Towle's series of books about the "Heroes of History," or one of Dr. Eggleston's "Lives of Famous Indians." I think you would find these, if not so feverish and breathless as the story-paper, full of real interest and healthy excitement. The advantage of getting an interest in these figures from real life is that you are not limited to the one book about them; if you want to find out more, there are other books to be consulted, and, more than all, there is some real knowledge gained, for you to add to. If Mr. Towle's "Pizarro" attracts you, go from that to Prescott's narrative of the conquest of Peru; and from that you may be led to his other histories of the Spanish dominion in America, and Prescott may thus introduce you to Irving and to Motley. And, when you have got so far, the whole field of European history is open before you. The one rule to begin is: Get the best—the best, that is, that you can read with satisfaction, and then go onward and upward.

And this brings us to the third class—those who know what to read, but desire advice as to how to get the best results from their reading. Having formed the habit of reading, and having thus got your foot on the ladder of

literary culture, how are you to get the most result from these? First of all, always think over a book when you have finished it. Criticise it. Form your own opinion of it. If you liked it, ask yourself why you liked it. If you disliked it, ask yourself why you did not like it. See if the fault was in the book or in you. If you were greatly interested, try and find out whether this was due to the author or to the subject. In short, consider carefully the impression the book has left on you. No matter how poor a book may be, the cheapest bit of cheap fiction, you ought to form an opinion about it, and be able to give some sort of a reason for it. It may not be easy at first, but practice makes perfect.

Then, if you can find somebody else who has read the book, talk it over; exchange your impression for his impression, and see whether, on sober second thought, he is more nearly right than you or not. Books which have been read by all of a family are excellent topics for general talk at table. And the listening to such talk is often of great influence on children. Children are naturally desirous of doing like grown folks; and, seeing that grown folks read and talk about books, makes them desirous to read books also, that they may have something to talk about too.

Try to correct your opinion of a book and to refreshen it by reading about it. If you have been reading a great author, see what the great critics have been saying of him. If you have been reading an essay on a great author or a biography of him, take up his own works next, that you may gain the benefit of the interest around about him.

If you have been reading any special history, try and see how it fits into the general history of the world : and for this purpose I know no books to be compared with Mr. Freeman's "Primer of European History" and his "First Sketch of History." These begin at the beginning, and tell the march of events to our generation. They are too slight and too much in outline—too rigid, indeed, to be the best works for one ignorant in history ; but for reviewing one's knowledge, for tying together the information one has got from special histories, I know no better books.

Then, as you are reading a book, it is well to mark important passages. If the book is your own—and a man should own as many good books as he can—make a light mark with a hard pencil in the margin of the passage. If the book is not yours, put in a slip of paper. When you have ended the book, read over the marked passages, and index those which on this second reading seem worthy of it, or likely in any way to be of use to you. If the book is yours, turn to the blank page at the end and give a hint of the passage and the page it is on ; thus :

John Brown. p. 21,

Shakespearean quotation, p. 47,

Anecdote of a wise dog, p. 93,

and so on. If the book is not yours, take a page in a notebook, or a sheet of note-paper, and make your index on that, heading it with the title of the book.

Mr. Joseph Cook tells us that he marks important passages with a line on the outer margin of the book he is reading, more important with a double line, and most important with a triple line ; while passages that he disagrees

with or disapproves of are marked in like manner with one, two, or three lines on the inner margin. He advises the committing to memory of all three-line passages. The reader should also strenuously cultivate the habit of searching diligently in dictionaries and encyclopædias and gazetteers, and in whatever books of reference he can get access to. He should let no allusion pass without an effort to find out what it means. Macaulay bristles with allusions, but there are scarcely any that a quick reader can not dig out of an encyclopædia in a few minutes. And, when found, make a note of it—as Cap'n Cuttle tells us. It is this faculty of filling up the breaks in his information which marks the man of education. It was the Bishop of Manchester who gave a good definition of the educated man: “When a man goes out into the world knowing when he does know a thing, knowing when he does not know a thing, and knowing how knowledge is to be acquired, I call him a perfectly educated man.”

It will astonish a beginner to find out how soon the habit of looking up things will beget a facility. As John Hill Burton says, in the “Bookhunter,” “all inquirers, like pointers, have a sort of instinct, sharpened by training and practice, the power and acuteness of which astonish the unlearned.” It is this “reading with the fingers,” this turning over of the pages rapidly and alighting on the exact spot where the thing wanted is to be found—this is the best test of active scholarship. “It is what enabled Bayle to collect so many flowers of literature—all so interesting, and yet all found in corners so distant and obscure.”

IV.

ON FICTION.

IN advocating increased facilities for reading good books, Dr. John Hall spoke of the value of a well-selected library to quell the "spirit of unrest which is agitating the poor, call it nihilism, or what you will, that sows the pernicious seeds of discord under the fair and plausible name of freedom and human rights." And Dr. Hall went on to declare that, in a well-selected library, fiction should be fully represented. "The imagination," he said, "is a fact of the human nature; it has its cravings, and has to be dealt with wisely. Some people will listen to things that they will not get in any other way in fiction. To suppose that everything can be ticketed with 'bad' or 'good' is baby-talk. Better say that they are first-rate, second-rate, and so on, to tenth- and twentieth-rate, even to a hundredth-rate. What we want to make people seek is the first-rate, and not to waste their strength on the tenth-rate."

In other words, Dr. Hall recognizes the truth of Sir John Herschel's dictum that the novel is "one of the most powerful engines of civilization ever invented." Yet there are those who do not believe in reading fiction. There is even an American librarian who arose recently,

in a meeting of American librarians, and declared he had never read a novel in his life. There are those who wish to confine the young to the study of science, and the continued examination of facts and consequent curbing of the imagination. There are those who would totally exclude all fiction—first-rate, second-rate, and tenth-rate—from all libraries, public and private. These Gradgrinds do not understand that fiction, as Dr. James Freeman Clarke says, “meets an eternal taste in man,” and that “a man who has no taste for fiction is deficient in some faculty. Reading fiction is not an evil to be abated, but a tendency to be educated, purified, and guided.” The taste for fiction is often a sign of the awakening of the intellect. “In the intellectual development of every person, who later on becomes a scholar,” remarks Mr. W. F. Poole, there is a period “when he craves novel-reading, and the craving ought to be satisfied. Jeremy Bentham, who was the most practical of English jurists, condemns the practice of his parents in keeping novels out of his reach and compelling him to read them by stealth ; and Lord Macaulay gives the same testimony in his own experience.”

Here are a cloud of witnesses who testify to the good that fiction may do, and to the necessity of letting it go about its good work. There is no need to call witnesses to testify to the harm that fiction may do. The evil done in the last generation and this by “Jack Sheppard” is known to all. The dreadful damage wrought to-day in every city, town, and village of these United States by the horrible and hideous stuff set weekly before the boys and

girls of America by the villainous sheets which pander greedily and viciously to the natural taste of young readers for excitement, the irreparable wrong done by these vile publications, is hidden from no one. But the best way to fight the evil is not by excluding fiction altogether, for, as we have seen, the love of fiction is a healthy love and a necessity, and all attempts to crush it must needs be futile. The better way is to supply good fiction in place of bad. Unless a young reader has become thoroughly contaminated by long soaking in the foul waters of low fiction, his taste can be improved. The bad stories are cheap and fiery. Give him good stories, as cheap and better, fuller of meat, stronger in tone, and in the main as interesting, and there is hope that in time he will give up the "Pirate's Bride" for Mayne Reid, Marryat, and Cooper. But it is hopeless to attempt to wean him from his blood-and-thunder tales by a diet of milk-and-water "Sunday-school" stories. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the ordinary "Sunday-school story" is not as pernicious and as demoralizing in one way as the fiery trash-tale is in another. It is, in fact, the two classes who have been fed on these two diets—the feeble and the fiery—who have most need of a strong and sustaining fare of wholesome fiction.

It is with the view of suggesting an ample supply of wholesome fiction that the following list of a hundred Best Novels has been drawn up. It is based on a similar list prepared by an eminent authority on all that pertains to books and to the reading of books, Mr. F. B. Perkins, and contributed by him to the excellent "Library Journal." Use has also been made of the answers sent in to two prize

questions published in the "Literary News"—a most useful little monthly magazine for all who are interested in the best books, new and old. One of the prize questions was the naming of the ten Best Novels, and the other was the naming of the ten Next Best Novels. The readers of the "Literary News" brought in a verdict that the ten Best Novels were these, arranged in the order of their popularity :

Charles Dickens's "David Copperfield."
Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe."
George Eliot's "Adam Bede."
Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter."
W. M. Thackeray's "Vanity Fair."
Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre."
Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."
W. M. Thackeray's "Newcomes."
Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables."
Miss Mulock's "John Halifax, Gentleman."

As to the ten Next Best Novels the readers of the "Literary News" could not quite agree. As to nine they had no doubt. The difficulty was to fill the tenth place, for which three competitors had equal votes. Arbitrarily deciding which of these three seems best to the present writer, the second decade of good novels consists of the following, arranged, as before, in order of their popularity :

Walter Scott's "Kenilworth."
W. M. Thackeray's "Henry Esmond."
George Eliot's "Romola."
Lord Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii."
George Eliot's "Middlemarch."
Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Marble Faun."

W. M. Thackeray's "Pendennis."

Charles Kingsley's "Hypatia."

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "House of Seven Gables."

George Eliot's "Mill on the Floss."

Now, it may be doubted whether any one novel-reader will accept the first list as the ten absolutely best novels, or the two lists together as the twenty absolutely best novels. But, that all ten and all twenty are very good novels indeed, no candid reader will be disposed to dispute. To us the best novel is the novel we like best, and as we differ from others, so our liking differs from that of others. It might not be difficult to find two people, or three, or four who agree that "David Copperfield" is absolutely the best novel ever written; but if they agreed in this they would probably not agree in thinking that "Ivanhoe" was the second best, and "Adam Bede" the third. As the length of the list increases, so does the difficulty of an exact agreement. Of the following list of a hundred Best Novels, all that the compiler can say for it is that all the hundred are very good novels, and that between seventy and ninety of the titles would reappear on any list made by any competent authority. No two men would make a list at all alike. No man would make a list like any woman's. And no old woman would pick out the same hundred novels as any young woman. The present list contains the names of a hundred Best Novels, written originally in English by British or American authors. Following it is a list of fifty Best Foreign Novels, easily accessible in translation to the American reader. In these two lists are included

nearly ninety of the novels on the list of Mr. Perkins, and all the novels on the two lists of the "Literary News." To show the diversity of opinion on this delicate subject, and the strength of personal feeling, it will suffice to say that Mr. Perkins omitted entirely from his list one novel—"John Halifax, Gentleman"—which forty-four readers of the "Literary News" voted to include among the ten Best Novels. He also omitted from his hundred two novels which the readers of the "Literary News" chose to include in the list of ten Next Best Novels. Plainly enough, the drawing up of a list like this is a marked evidence of the existence of what the astronomers call the personal equation. Here, however, is my doxy; you are free in turn to make your doxy.

List of a hundred Best Novels in English :

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe." | Scott's "Rob Roy." |
| Swift's "Gulliver's Travels." * | "Ivanhoe." |
| Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." | "Talisman." |
| Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield." | "Old Mortality." |
| Smollett's "Humphrey Clinker." * | "Quentin Durward." |
| Fielding's "Tom Jones." * | "Heart of Midlothian." |
| Johnson's "Rasselas." | "Kenilworth." |
| Godwin's "Caleb Williams." | Miss Austen's "Pride and Prejudice." |
| Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein." | "Sense and Sensibility." |
| Beckford's "Vathek." | Dickens's "Pickwick Papers." |
| Scott's "Waverley." | "Nicholas Nickleby." |
| "Guy Mannering." | "David Copperfield." |
| "Bride of Lammermoor." | "Dombey and Son." |
| | "Tale of Two Cities." |

* The novels marked with an asterisk, although English classics, are not to be recommended to the young.

- Dickens's "Oliver Twist."
 Thackeray's "Vanity Fair."
 "Pendennis."
 "Newcomes."
 "Henry Esmond."
 George Eliot's "Adam Bede."
 "Romola."
 "Mill on the Floss."
 "Middlemarch."
 Marryat's "Japhet in search of a Father."
 "Midshipman Easy."
 Michael Scott's "Tom Cringle's Log."
 Lever's "Charles O'Malley."
 "Harry Lorrequer."
 Lover's "Handy Andy."
 Porter's "Scottish Chiefs."
 Brontë's "Jane Eyre."
 Bulwer's "My Novel."
 "Last Days of Pompeii."
 Warren's "Ten Thousand a Year."
 Kingsley's "Hypatia."
 "Yeast."
 Disraeli's "Coningsby."
 Miss Mulock's "John Halifax, Gentleman."
 Hughes's "Tom Brown at Rugby."
 Sheppard's "Charles Auchester."
 Collins's "Woman in White."
 Reade's "Peg Woffington."
 Hardy's "Far from the Madding Crowd."
 Anthony Trollope's "Last Chronicles of Barsetshire."
 Walter Besant's "Chaplain of the Fleet."
- E. C. Grenville Murray's "Member for Paris."
 Mrs. Oliphant's "Chronicles of Carlingford."
 William Black's "Princess of Thule."
 "Strange Adventures of a Phaeton."
 R.D. Blackmore's "Lorna Doone."
 Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter."
 "Marble Faun."
 "House with Seven Gables."
 Charles Brockden Brown's "Arthur Mervin."
 W. G. Simms's "Beauchampe."
 Judd's "Margaret."
 Wetherell's "Wide, Wide World."
 Ware's "Zenobia."
 Holland's "Sevenoaks."
 De Forest's "Overland."
 F. M. Crawford's "Mr. Isaacs."
 Cooper's "Spy."
 "Pilot."
 "Red Rover."
 "Water-witch."
 "Last of the Mohicans."
 Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."
 "Old Town Folks."
 "Minister's Wooing."
 Longfellow's "Hyperion."
 "Kavanagh."
 Kennedy's "Horseshoe Robinson."
 Melville's "Typee."
 Winthrop's "John Brent."
 "Edwin Brothertoft."
 Holmes's "Elsie Venner."
 Aldrich's "Queen of Sheba."

| | |
|---|---|
| Mrs. Burnett's "A Fair Barba- rian." | Howells's "Their Wedding Jour- ney." |
| Eggleston's "Roxy." | "A Chance Acquaintance." |
| "Hoosier Schoolmaster." | "The Undiscovered Coun- try." |
| Cooke's "Virginia Comedians." | James's "The American." |
| Cable's "Madame Delphine." "The Grandissimes." | "Roderick Hudson." |

In this list of a hundred Best Novels in English the word novel has been taken to cover any work of fiction—novel, romance, or tale—sufficiently long to stand by itself. It seemed best to exclude short stories and sketches, although this has been done with the greatest regret, as there is no department of literature in which American authors have been more successful than in the very difficult art of writing a short story. Young as our literature is, having lived a life of barely half a century, our short stories may safely challenge the world. The short stories of Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bret Harte, George W. Cable, T. B. Aldrich, Edward Everett Hale, and Constance Fenimore Woolson are of a very high order of merit. Mr. Hale's extraordinarily effective and affecting story of "The Man without a Country" is a work of art surpassing in value all but the best of the novels in the preceding list. The collection of short stories called "Little Classics," and edited by Mr. Rossiter Johnson, may be recommended highly.

In the list of fifty Best Foreign Novels, herewith appended, I have marked with an asterisk the half-dozen tales which are least fitted for young readers, not that they are at all immoral, but merely because they are not the best food for youth. Here is the list :

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Cervantes's "Don Quixote." | Cherbuliez's "Samuel Brohl & Co." |
| Le Sage's "Gil Blas." * | Daudet's "Nabob." * |
| Prévost's "Manon Lescaut." * | Souvestre's "Attic Philosopher." |
| Saintine's "Picciola." | Gaboriau's "File No. 113." |
| Saint-Pierre's "Paul and Virginia." | Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." |
| Lamartine's "Graziella." | "Elective Affinities." * |
| Hugo's "Notre Dame de Paris." | Fouqué's "Undine." |
| "Les Misérables." | "Sintram." |
| De Vigny's "Cinq-Mars." | Auerbach's "On the Heights." |
| Sue's "Wandering Jew." | Chamisso's "Peter Schlemihl." |
| "Mysteries of Paris." * | Ebers's "Uarda." |
| Balzac's "Eugénie Grandet." | Spielhagen's "Hammer and Anvil." |
| Gautier's "Captain Fracasse." | Werner's "Good Luck." |
| Dumas's "Monte Cristo." | Marlitt's "Old Mamselle's Secret." |
| "Three Guardsmen." * | Scheffel's "Ekkehard." |
| George Sand's "Consuelo." | Heyse's "In Paradise." |
| "La Petite Fadette" (Fanchon). | Muhlbach's "Frederick the Great." |
| Flaubert's "Madame Bovary." * | Freytag's "Debit and Credit." |
| Feuillet's "Romance of a Poor Young Man." | Fritz Renter's "In the Year '18." |
| Halévy's "Abbé Constantin." | Von Hillern's "Geier-wally." |
| Henri Greville's "Sonia." | Bjornsen's "Fisher Maiden." |
| "Dosia." | Victor Rydberg's "Last Athenian." |
| About's "Romance of an Honest Man." | Andersen's "Improvisatore." |
| "King of the Mountains." | Turgenev's "Smoke." |
| Ereckmann-Chatrian's "Conscript of 1813." | Manzoni's "Betrothed." |
| Jules Verne's "Round the World in 80 Days." | |

"A Reading Diary of Modern Fiction," published by F. Leypoldt (New York), contains an excellent list of fiction, with many interesting and introductory criticisms and opinions.

ON THE LIBRARY AND ITS FURNITURE.

IF a man with a fondness for books has also money enough to build a special room to hold them, as did the late William E. Burton to contain his fine theatrical library, he ought to consult those learned in the law of book-protecting. He would be told that the library should have very thick walls, to exclude the damp of spring, the heat of summer, and the cold of winter. He would be informed that the library should have windows only on one side, and that these windows should be recessed, that the sun may not shine in too violently, to the increase of moths and worms, and to the destruction of bindings. He would learn that the library should not be a corner, and that it should be protected, if possible, by other rooms on three sides. There are those who advocate a library wholly without windows, and lighted only by a skylight, but this is too severe and cheerless an arrangement for a true book-lover. There should be no carpet on the floor, for carpets hold dust, and dust is a great danger to books. Rugs, which may be shaken frequently, are sufficient covering for the floor. The heating arrangements, an open fire-place if convenient, should be ample enough to warm the room without making

it hot ; the ordinary hot-air furnace is very injurious to books.

These, however, are prescriptions for those who carry a long purse. The ordinary American, for whose use and behoof this simple treatise is intended, is well satisfied if he can give up any corner of his house to his books. As often as not it is an odd room, useless for any other purpose, and cheerless at all times. Now, this ought not to be. The library should be a room into which every member of the family may feel glad to go. It ought to be bright and cheerful. It ought to be easily accessible. It ought to be warmed in winter, and protected from the glare of the sun in summer.

If the only room which can be devoted to holding books is too small to hold all the volumes the family is fortunate enough to own, or if no room at all can be given up to them exclusively, then by all means let the books overflow the house. Some authors have had books in almost every room of their residence. Southey had his even down along the staircase, lining its walls, and Shelley declares that Southey did not like his venturing to take down a volume as he descended the steps.

There are book-cases and book-cases, just as there are books and books. There is the richly carved cabinet, with its inlaid panels, its elaborate brass, its silken curtains, its beveled glass, its chamois-covered shelves, its tough back carefully protected against damp, all uniting to perfect a fit tabernacle for priceless volumes, so old, so rare, so beautifully bound as to be absolutely too precious for human creatures' daily food. There is the single board

held against the side of a shanty by a bit of string and a nail or two and supporting a worn Emerson, an old copy of Franklin, a cheap Shakespeare and two or three volumes of Cooper, Scott, or Longfellow, battered and worn—and yet far more highly prized by their owner than any bibliophile's treasure which he loves selfishly, merely as the miser loves his gold. And between these two extremes are numberless intermediate varieties. There is the sober row of books filling the top of the mantel-piece—a bad

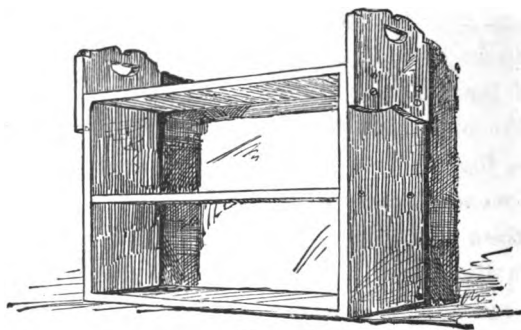


FIG. 4.

place for books, as the warped backs and cracking covers reveal only too soon. There is the first attempt at a bookcase, the box once filled with soap or wine, now planed and stained and divided in two by a transverse partition, which serves as a shelf, and with the bottom and the top gives accommodation for three rows of books (Fig. 4); this primitive device is not to be despised, for it will afford shelf-room for quite fifty volumes, two thirds of which are inside the box, and are thus always ready to move and easy to handle. In a country with a population as nomadic as

ours, any book-case, however elementary, which holds books as well in one place as another, and as well when moving from one place to another as when settled, and which saves all trouble of packing before transport and of rearrangement afterward, is not without its good points ; and there are many worse ways of providing for books than a combination—by means of a few screws—of half a dozen such boxes into a large stand. If sets of these boxes were placed back to back they might do service as a screen to divide a room or to form an alcove before a window—an alcove which could be utilized as the study of a minister or lawyer or journalist hard pressed for space.

Almost as simple as this improvised book-case, and perhaps better suited to most tastes, are the sets of hanging shelves now to be found in nearly all book-stores (Figs. 5 and 6). Three, four, or five light-wood shelves, less than a yard in length, are united by thin but strong iron rods which bend back at the top



FIG. 5.

to hook over nails on the wall. A large-sized set of these hanging shelves will accommodate two or three hundred volumes ; and even a smaller set will afford room for a full hundred. These shelves are symmetrical and graceful ; they can be packed in a very small space, and

they can be put together in a very short time. In many houses there are not more books than will fill a set of these hanging shelves; and, even in houses where there

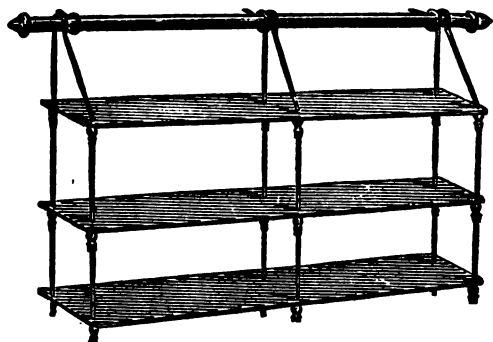


FIG. 6.

is a library with an abundance of books, there are likely to be members of the family who own and cherish their individual collections of volumes which they can hang on the walls of their own rooms under their own eyes.

For those who have but few books, which they must needs have at hand when they are working, nothing can be better or more simple than the two little portable, or rather movable, book-stands devised by Mr. F. B. Patterson. He calls the plainer a "Lawyer's Brief-Rack" (Fig. 7); and nothing can be handier for a lawyer hard at work consulting cases than this double row of reports and text-books kept ready to his hand on this pair of neat shelves, mounted on casters, and easy to roll into a corner at will. A slightly more elaborate design Mr. Patterson calls an "Easy-Reference Book-Stand" (Fig.



FIG. 7.

8); it is intended to hold two rows of books of reference, encyclopædias, biographical or geographical dictionaries, while the more bulky Unabridged American Dictionary lies on its side on a lower shelf, and an atlas—

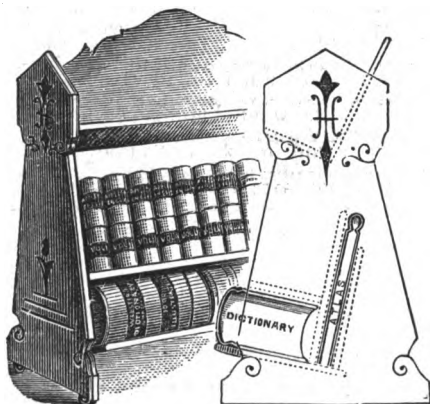


FIG. 8.

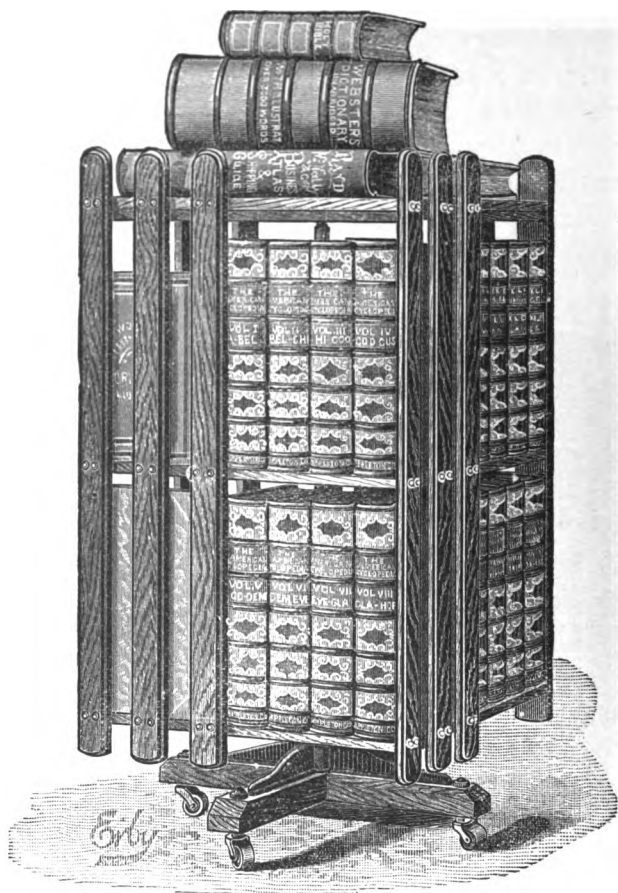


FIG. 9.

always an inconvenient book to store away—stands up in a pocket behind.

Almost as simple as Mr. Patterson's excellent little stands is the Danner Revolving Book-Case (Fig. 9), which

is also intended chiefly to hold books of reference. It is made in many sizes and styles. The revolving book-case shown in the illustration will hold nearly fifty bulky volumes. It is mounted on casters, and can be kept in a corner out of the way.

More ample than the hanging shelves, or either of these reference book-cases, are the so-called Eastlake Portable

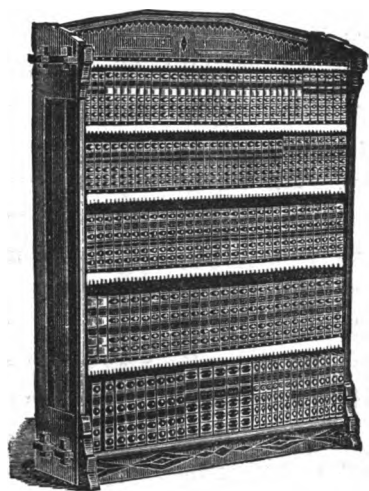


FIG. 10.

Book - Cases (Fig. 10), which stand four or five feet high from the floor and hold five or six shelves, three or four feet long. They will accommodate, perhaps, twice as many volumes as the largest set of hanging shelves; and, as they stand solidly and firmly on the floor, they may be laden safely with heavy tomes which one might not be willing to trust to the more fragile hanging shelves.

When a greater collection of books has been got together than can be stored comfortably in one or two of these simple and ready-made book-cases, the collector begins to feel that he has something worthy of being called a library, and he is likely to seek to house it more luxuriously. In all probability a separate room is set apart for

the literary treasures, and this room is called the library, and its walls are more or less lined with book-cases made to order. And here we are met at once with the question as to whether the book-cases ought to have doors or not. There is great diversity of opinion among experts. The manufacturer of the Eastlake Portable Book-case has solved the question to his satisfaction by doing without doors. The ordinary maker of ready-made furniture solves the question to his satisfaction in turn by offering for sale a book-case with glass doors. And the collector of bibliographic curiosities solves it anew also to his satisfaction by hiding his treasures in a book-case with wooden doors, seeking in vain to keep out the light which fades and the dust which destroys. There are those who have open shelves adorned with a pendant fringe of leather or cloth. There are those again who have doors of open frame-work filled with wire netting.

Which is the best of these many arrangements, it is not easy to declare ; and yet a search for the reason why a thing is, may help us toward a proper solution of the problem. The object of doors is to preserve the books from dust. It may be said, once for all, that doors do not succeed in keeping out dust altogether. And, though they keep out much of the dust, they also keep out most of the air. Now, a book is like a human being, in that it needs air and light. Without air and light it is likely to deteriorate, to decay, to mildew, and to rot. The learned Mr. Blades advises against doors, declaring that "the absence of ventilation will assist the formation of mold." The learned M. Rouveyre, however, advocates doors, advising

that they be opened on sunny days, but carefully closed before night-fall, that no moth enter in to corrupt. And the learned Mr. Lang seems to agree with the learned M. Rouveyre rather than with the learned Mr. Blades. Yet where doctors disagree we are surely justified in choosing the better part of beauty and convenience. Therefore, let doors be eschewed for the most part, so that the books on your shelves may keep themselves whole in the blessed light and the necessary air; but let them be taken down carefully twice or three times a year and dusted thoroughly, while their shelves are also cleaned, with a full desire to draw as near as possible to godliness. Books arranged on open shelves have a kindly and more comfortable welcome than when caged behind glass. Wooden doors are little better than selfishness, and doors with wire screens are rank barbarity. There is a delight in being able to put your hand on a book at will without having to seek for a hidden key to turn a cruel lock and to open an unnecessary door. There is no danger then that the key is lost or that the lock is rusty. The hospitable shelves proffer their stores of wisdom, and of wit, without hesitation, as though begging you to help yourself. All is as open to the hand as to the eye. The owner knows the place of every volume, and can put his hand in the dark on the book he seeks.

It is just because of this liberal and generous openness that it is well to have in a library one case with glass doors, that the more valuable volumes may be kept there in safety from the hand of the chance visitor, ignorant of their quality and capable of doing damage unwittingly.

For those who collect pamphlets, who preserve back numbers of magazines and periodicals, who accumulate all sorts of literary orts and ends, it is well, also, to have another case with wooden doors, behind which these unsightly gatherings shall be preserved from the profane eye, and shall be protected as far as may be from the wear and dust of the open shelves. But these are distinctly exceptions, and their recognition as such makes the general rule only more emphatic. This general rule is to keep books on open shelves in sight, open to the air and the light and the friendly hand, guarding them against dust and decay by careful examination and cleansing at least twice a year.

It is not a difficult matter to combine harmoniously in a single book-case the open shelves, the cupboard, and the glazed compartment, and even to add other useful adjuncts like drawers to receive odd papers and prints, and a slide to sustain books of reference for temporary use. An admirable arrangement (Fig. 11) is to have at the bottom of the book-case a drawer eight or ten inches deep to contain pamphlets which may be packed on edge with only their backs showing, a mode of storing especially useful for plays and annual reports of societies. Above the drawer is a cupboard, perhaps twenty inches high, closed with wooden doors and containing two shelves, whereon may repose unbound magazines, files of periodicals, and numbers of subscription works in course of publication. Above this, again, a shallow drawer three inches deep is often of use for papers, cards, and other orts and ends which it is well to have at hand always and at the most convenient height. Over this drawer there may be a slide of flat board, to be

pulled out on occasion when a heavy book is to be consulted for a moment, or when books are waiting to be put in place on the shelves. The open book-shelves begin thus at about a yard from the floor and rise as high as may be

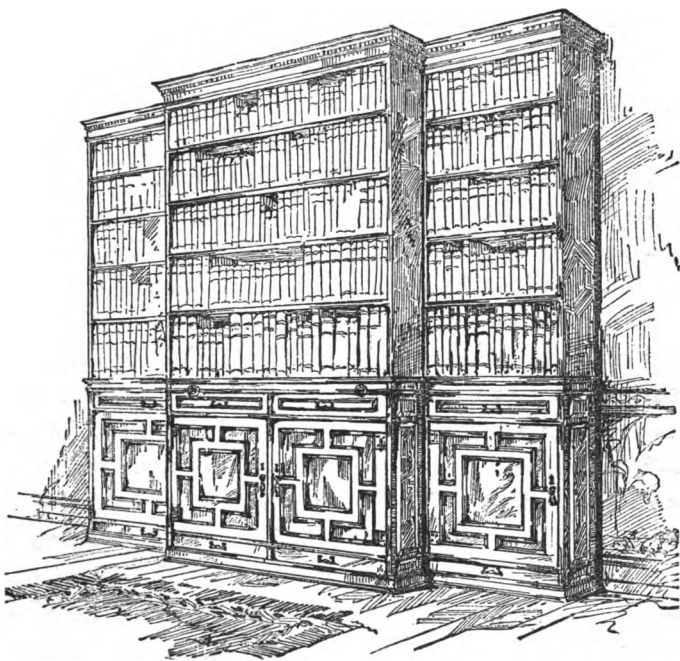


FIG. 11.

necessary. It is well to divide a book-case of this sort into sections not exceeding a yard in width, so that, for example, in a room of average size with a mantel-piece in the center of one wall, there would be room for three sections on each side of it. Then the section in the center of the

opposite wall, facing the fire-place, may easily be made a little more elaborate, with higher cupboards and, perhaps, wider shelves—and to these shelves it may be well to add glass doors, that the more delicate and precious of the literary treasures in the libraries may be stored therein.

Whatever the arrangement of book-cases, whether with or without doors, and whatever their width, they should not be too tall. Of course, where many books have to be crowded into a small room, the owner must needs pile up his shelves until they almost touch the ceiling. But, when necessity does not compel such an attempt to compress as many books as possible into a narrow space, the topmost shelf should not be so tall that a man standing on the floor can not take down from it any book he seeks without undue extension of his limbs. This limit of height is advisable for two reasons: First, because it obviates the demand for a step-ladder, which is always an awkward article of furniture to conceal in a small room; and, second, and indeed chiefly, because heat ascends, and the upper part of a room is sure to be many degrees hotter than the lower, and heat, especially the dry heat of gas and hot-air furnaces, is very injurious to books, decaying and cracking the bindings and bringing rapidly to light any hidden defects in the paper. As a fact, to have the topmost shelf in easy reach is the extreme limit to which the height of a book-case ought to be allowed to rise. The old-fashioned library, public and private alike, with its Gothic architecture, its vaulted ceiling, its lofty alcoves, and its circling gallery, piled high with books rising tier on tier, is wholly unscientific, in that the books are as

hard of access to man as they are easy to moth and rust. The upper galleries of a high-arched library are almost as hot as the upper galleries of a theatre. Books are not the better for being baked, any more than is man. The massive pile of buildings, with a great dome towering over all, no longer meets with the approval of the expert in library science.

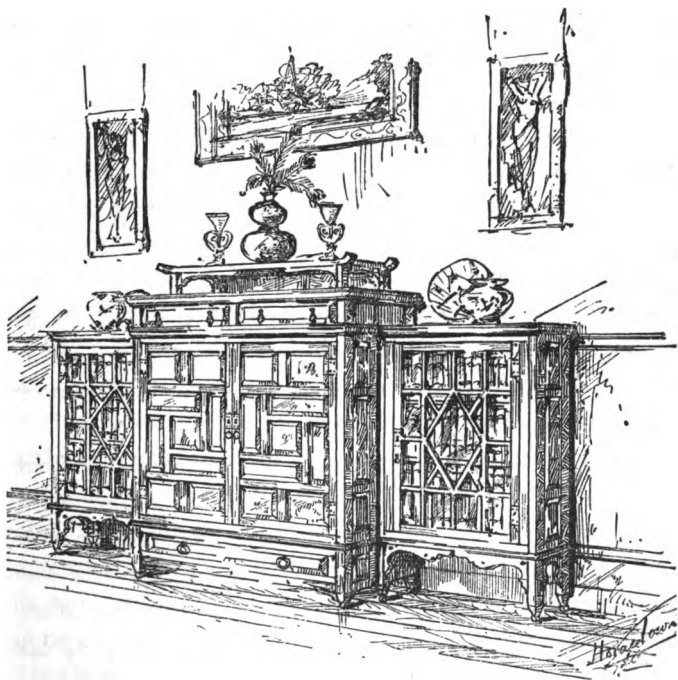


FIG. 12.

The tall book-case, like the tall house, is only tolerable when needs must. Where the accommodation is spacious, low cases are incomparably more convenient, more

comely, and in every way more satisfactory. In a large room like a picture gallery, low book-cases (Fig. 12) in a row, rising only waist-high, afford standing room on their tops for abundant *bric-à-brac*, under and in front of the lines of hanging frames. An irregularity in the height is pleasing to the eye; and the higher cases might be cupboards with wooden doors to conceal unbound engravings and photographs, while the intervening cases, somewhat lower, have their open shelves crowded with books on art and artists.

Save for decorative effect, curtains before open bookshelves are useless. Nor are they of any greater utility when put behind glass doors, unless that particular bookcase happens to contain a litter of pamphlets or other orts and ends which it is well to hide from the public eye. The little leather fringes often found attached to the shelves of the ready-made book-case are of no use either. They keep out scarcely any dust, and they soon dry up themselves and fall into powder.

The best wood for library furniture, especially for bookcases, is oak. Ash and walnut are also good. Thoroughly seasoned pine is not bad. In a simple book-case, or where it is thought well to put shelves in the hollow of a doorway, the door of which is kept locked, an easy way of supporting the shelves at any height one pleases is to take four screw-hooks or picture-eyes and turn them well into the sides of the book-case or the jambs of the doorway, leaving them flat on a level, that the four corners of the shelf may rest on them.

VI.

ON BOOK-BINDING.

THE taste for fine bindings, for clothing a good book in the best attire, for glorifying a great author's work by a truly artistic setting, is growing among those in America who have the leisure to think about the fitness of things, and the money to spend on the gratification of their cultivated inclinations.

Unfortunately, the eagerness of the many is greater than their discretion; and, even among those who ought to know better, we find a half-informed ignorance and a misdirected energy. To learn to like the delicate workmanship of a beautiful binding takes natural taste and lapse of time. To know even what good binding is and to be able to say whether and why a book is well bound are accomplishments only to be gained by study and opportunity. There are many people in the United States fond of books, and given to reading, who have never in the whole course of their lives had occasion to handle and examine a really admirable specimen of the book-binder's art in the higher branches. The ordinary commercial binding, the putting of a book into cloth covers, has been carried here to its highest extreme. Nowhere will you find better work of this kind than on the

shelves of American publishers. Often the stamps impressed on the sides of American books are simple, appropriate, and truly beautiful. Some of the copies of Mr. Cable's "*Madame Delphine*," for instance, were sent forth in olive-green, with a stamp in rich red, representing fruit and leaves; and it is difficult to describe the extraordinary strength and propriety of this simple design. M. du Chaillu's "*Land of the Midnight Sun*" had a most striking cover, bold without vulgarity. These are fair instances of American binding; the covers of the English editions of these two books were wholly different, and altogether inferior. But it is not with this commercial covering in cloth, good, or bad, or indifferent—as the most of it is—that we have now to do. The object of the present chapter is to draw attention to the more artistic and more permanent binding in leather, which alone permits of indefinite adornment.

A book-case filled with volumes bound in cloth, no matter how effective and elaborate may be the gold on their backs, has never the varied and rich appearance of a book-case filled with volumes bound in calf, vellum, morocco, or Russian leather. Now, there is a great difference in the books, and in the duration of these and other leathers. And yet few people, in buying a handsome set of books for themselves, or as a present, ever pause to consider whether the binding will prove durable or not. This assertion may be made unhesitatingly, because if book-buyers were in the habit of considering the quality, as well as the appearance, of the bindings they bought, the book-sellers would soon cease to offer, and

certainly to recommend, bindings as fragile and as temporary as Russian leather, for instance. Russian leather looks very pretty, but it wears very badly. Except, possibly, on books that are very much handled, and so take up the oil of the human hand, it soon dries, and then cracks at the hinges and splits at the edges. Calf is almost, but not quite, as feeble ; it takes color well, and gives a showy and attractive back to a book. But it can not be called durable. None of the bindings one meets with ready-made are more beautiful than tree-calf. Yet, if you ever have occasion to examine a tree-calf binding fifty or a hundred years old, you might be surprised to see how all its beauty is faded, as its colors have dried and its sides have shriveled. The one leather which is at once lasting and good-looking is morocco. Genuine morocco is a goat-skin, and it has a long, tough fiber ; the fiber of calf-skin is fine and close, so that it cracks whenever it is exposed to heat, and in an American house all books are exposed to heat. Morocco takes color as well as calf, if not better ; and it holds color far longer than calf.

A well-dyed red morocco is said to be the only binding which does not fade, or change its hue. Remembering these facts, it is safe to advise the use of morocco, and the absolute disuse of calf and russia. Sheep-skin is used on law books and dictionaries, and other works of reference, and is very well suited for such purpose. It peels easily, but it wears well, and is not expensive. A dyed sheep-skin with a polished surface is called roan, and serves well enough as a cheap substitute for morocco, especially in half-bound books. A set of sober tomes looks solid and

substantial when plainly bound in half-roan. There are lovers of books who declare that half-binding is an abomination, and that a book worth binding at all is worth binding in full morocco. And so it is—if you have the money. Most of us have to count the cost carefully; binding can not be done cheaply; and the covering of the sides of a book with leather very materially increases the expense, without greatly increasing the durability. Of course, if you have a volume of great price—if you have a folio of one of the old dramatists, if you have the original edition of Molière's "Don Juan," if you have one of Benjamin Franklin's books, enriched by MS. notes in his own handwriting—then it is your duty, and it should be your pleasure, to do the best by it your purse will admit. Certainly it ought to be bound in full morocco, and adorned with as much bravery of tooling as your taste and pocket desire.

For most books, however, a good, substantial binding in half-morocco is sufficient. A book half-bound in red morocco, with red morocco corners, gilt tops, and uncut edges, is a sightly object, if the work has been well, and carefully, and conscientiously done. And as the object of half-binding is to save the extra expense of full binding, it is more appropriate that a half-bound book should not make any great display of gilding on its back. The simpler the tooling, the better. Best of all is it to have nothing stamped on the back of the book except the lettering needed to identify it. On an ordinary half-bound book the binder can not afford the time to do tooling and gilding with the care and nicety needed for really good work; and,

in default of the best work, it is better to have none, and to rely on the richness of the leather for effect. But whether a book is half-bound or full-bound, whether it is clad in gorgeous red morocco, or in somber half-roan, there are certain qualities which it ought to have, and which it will have only when the owner chooses his binder with care and insists on the carrying out of his directions. First of all, he should not allow the binder to remove a single leaf of the volume. There are brutal binders who have been known to take out the bastard title, the page which contains the title of the book and nothing else, and which precedes the title-page. And nearly all binders will take off the cover of a book originally bound in paper. Now, it calls for only a moment's reflection to see that this cover, which often contains a special engraving, is an integral part of the book, and absolutely demands a place within its covers when it is bound.

Consider the original serial editions of Thackeray and of Dickens in monthly parts, and you will see that the failure to bind in at least one of these covers, in covering the volume with leather, deprives the book of one of its most characteristic engravings. Consider, again, the paper-covered books of the French; consider the dainty and delicate American books in which the best work of the Parisian publishers is imitated and emulated—reference is intended especially to Mr. Stedman's "Poe," and Mr. Aldrich's "Sonnets and Lyrics"—and you will see that the cover is so completely a part of the book that to tear it off as you put the volume in the binder's hands is to wrench away one of its chief beauties. Quite as important as the in-

clusion of all the pages in the book is the preservation of all these pages in their integrity, unshorn by the knife. It is a hard struggle always to keep a binder from curtailing the fair margins of a book. Nothing adds so much to the beauty of a page as a wide expanse of margin. But no binder—except a few of the foremost—has any appreciation of this beauty; and the owner needs must stand over him with a drawn sword, insisting that his wishes be carried out. There is really no object in ever cutting, or in any way curtailing, the side or the bottom of a book. It is only the top that needs to be smooth, because dust settles on the tops of books, and, if these tops are irregular, the dirt can not be removed readily, and may even penetrate into the book itself. For this reason it is well to have the top shaved off slightly, and gilt. Then, when a book is taken down from an upper shelf, a puff of the breath will remove the dust from the top, and a touch of the finger, or a waft of the napkin, or of a chamois leather, will take off the rest. But dust does not accumulate on the edges of a book, for these stand upright; nor on the bottom, for that is next to the shelf: so there is no excuse for cutting either the edges or the bottom. On the back of an ordinary half-bound it is best, as has been said already, to put nothing but the lettering. The owner should always prescribe the form and order of this lettering, bearing in mind the fact that on the shelf the back only of the book is exposed, and that it should, therefore, furnish as much information as possible as to its contents, so that the book may not have to be taken down needlessly. First in importance are the title of the

book and the name of the author ; next, the number of the volume (if it has more than one), and an indication of the months and years of its first appearance (if it is a periodical, either a magazine or an annual). Then the volume containing the index should always report this fact on its back. Lastly, down at the bottom should appear the date as it is given on the title-page ; and in many cases it is well to precede this with the place of publication. And every volume of a full set of an author's works should declare on its back its own contents ; for example, it is not sufficient that a volume should be "Hawthorne's Works, 6" ; it must also be stamped, "The Scarlet Letter."

These are all the necessary things ; but if you are fond of books and binding, and wish to identify your books as yours, and yours only, it is well to have a special tool cut, containing your initials, or your signature, or your monogram, or your device, or something of this sort, which shall show that the binding was done for you, and that the book was once yours. There is scarcely a collector of American dramatic books who has not one or more volumes bearing on their backs the signature of "W. E. Burton," and thereby revealing that they came from the extensive theatrical library of that learned comedian. Some collectors have more than one of these special tools, and stamp with a lyre every volume of poetry, and with a mask every book about the theatre, and so on. The use of a personal stamp like this on your books gives much pleasure at little cost, and affords a keener sense of possession in them.

It is well, also, not to be in a hurry to bind. No book should go into the binder's hands for at least a year after it is printed, as it takes that time for the ink to dry thoroughly. Two or three years, or even five years, are not too long to wait before binding a book filled with wood-cuts. And perhaps this is as good a chance as any to advise that all inserted engravings, plans, or maps folded in the book should be carefully mounted on muslin, whenever the volume is bound, else they are sure to tear, sooner or later, and to wear away at the folds.

It is well, also, to consider carefully whether a book ought to be bound or not. There is no use wasting a good binding on a poor book. There is no use in re-binding an old book when its old binding had better be repaired. Old bindings are often very interesting; a contemporary binding is always more appropriate than a modern one; and it is advisable, therefore, to see if the binding can not be restored. A skillful binder can accomplish marvels with a cover which seems hopeless to the eye of a layman. It is well to pause awhile before putting a cloth-covered book into more substantial leather, for the stamp on the cover may be highly characteristic, and demand preservation. As Hawthorne said, you may "strip off the real skin of a book in order to put it into fine clothes." This is the case with Mr. Cable's "Madame Delphine," already referred to, with the various editions of Mr. Walt Whitman's prose and poetry, and with very many other books. If this cloth, or board, or paper cover is slight or fragile, then the true book-lover has a morocco case made in the semblance of a book, and in this box the precious volume

may be kept guarded from dust and heat and the profane eye. It is well to examine your books carefully as they come from the binder, and to see that they fulfill the conditions of a well-bound book. Mr. Matthews, one of the best and most artistic binders in America, recognizes four essentials in binding of the first class :

1. The book must be beat and pressed until it is smooth and solid.

2. It must be sewed strong and yet flexible, to open freely when bound.

3. It must be forwarded or shaped true, and covered perfect, leaving the boards free in the joint and neat in the turning-in, showing no joins at corners.

4. The ornamentation must be suitable to the book, in good taste and tooled with clearness and exactness.

The council of the British Library Association has suggested as a pattern for ordinary binding that the volumes be sewn all along, with the first and last sheets overcast, on strong cords, the slips to be drawn in all along and the backs made close (flexible) ; half-bound with corners of the same material ; smooth cloth sides ; edges cut, sprinkled, and burnished, or, if so directed, top edge only cut, etc., the others trimmed and left with proof ; end-papers of stout Cobb's paper, with cloth joints in quartos and folios ; lettered with author's name, short title, and date ; gilt fillets, but no other tooling ; two-page plates to be guarded so as to open out flat ; all materials of the best quality, and the work to be done carefully.

Mr. Tedder, from whose article I have taken the paragraph above, notes that the British Museum has adopted

a style of binding in half-morocco, with the leather coming only just over the back to act as a hinge, the sides whole cloth, and the corners tipped with vellum ; and this is probably as good a cheap binding as can be devised. I feel bound to protest forcibly against the British Library Association's willingness to let the binder touch the edges of a book ; it is heretical lenity to an unpardonable sin.

It is well, also, not to begrudge money for a fine piece of work. Good binding takes time and thought and skill ; and these can not be had for nothing. The best binding is the cheapest. Only plain and simple binding can be inexpensive. Fine binding is one of the fine arts, and an artist will not work for the wages of a day laborer. If you take advantage of every opportunity to examine bindings of a high order, if you seriously study them, you will soon see that there may be a vast difference between two books which look alike ; one has been bound by a journeyman, the other by an artist. And the artist is worthy of his hire.

It is well, when contracting with a binder, to furnish him with an actually bound book as a sample for him to work by, and as a standard by which to judge his work. It is well never to countenance any shams of any kind, such as imitation leather, or leatherette, or calf masquerading as russia. It is well to examine minutely all old books for old MS. notes, or signatures, or autographs of any kind ; these should be carefully preserved, as they are always of interest, and often of value. If an old book comes to you with the book-plate of a former owner, treat this mark of his possession with respect. Preserve it

scrupulously. If you wish the front space it probably occupies for your own book-plate, transfer it gently and carefully to the fly-leaf at the end, making a note of this fact, and giving the date of the transfer on the fly-leaf below the book-plate.

And now a word as to the color of binding, and these random notes cease, and determine, and come to an end. It has been said already that red is the most lasting dye for leather. There are in existence books bound in red morocco three hundred years old, and the color is almost as brilliant to-day as when the book was first bound. But there are other colors nearly as good; and, at best, few of us expect to live three hundred years, or care to take thought so long ahead. Many book-lovers, too, may prefer a less splendid tint. Many, again, are fond of variety. It may be confessed that a library all in red would be rich, but monotonous. It is advisable not to attempt a uniformity of color, whether red or not.

An expert in the art, Hartley Coleridge laid down the law that "the binding of a book should always suit its complexion. . . . The costume of a volume should always be in keeping with its subject, and with the character of its author. How absurd it is to see the works of William Penn in flaming scarlet, and George Fox's Journal in bishop's purple! Theology should be solemnly gorgeous. History should be ornamental after the Antique or Gothic fashion. Works of science as plain as is consistent with dignity. Poetry *simplex munditiis*." Mr. Wheatley tells us that the British Museum made an attempt to carry out this and other similar suggestions, and its historical books

were therefore "bound in red, theology in blue, poetry in yellow, and natural history in green." He adds that this system had its advantages when the books were unclassified upon its shelves ; but, "when all the books of one class were brought together, the general effect in a library was very patchy, and the advantage of distinctness was lost." There is, in fact, a great disadvantage in binding books of the same class uniformly, since this increases the difficulty of picking out the work you may need. The late Charles Dilke, who confessed that he was a dandy about his books, had all his many Junius volumes bound every one differently, so that he could readily and at once put his hand on the one he wanted. And in a small collection of books this is well worth bearing in mind.

To sum up : In most cases the best binding is red morocco, lightly tooled, gilt top, uncut edges, lettered with the name of the author, the title of the work, the number of the volume, the place and date of publication. If the book is half-bound only, then the sides should be of smooth paper.

Space fails here to consider at length the more exalted ranges of the book-binder's art. In these pages the constant endeavor has been to dwell on the most useful device and not on the most beautiful, although the perfect adaptation of means to an end is nearly always beautiful in itself. But there is a great difference between a book simply and substantially bound for daily use and a book bound, without regard to cost, by a master of the art, to repose and to be admired as a masterpiece in the cabinet of a collector. A volume bound by a famous binder like

Trautz-Bauzonnet or Derome, or for a famous collector like Grolier, has a value wholly independent of the worth of the book itself. No one who has had occasion to gaze on a collection of beautiful bindings can be blind to the grace and suavity of contour and the delicate harmony

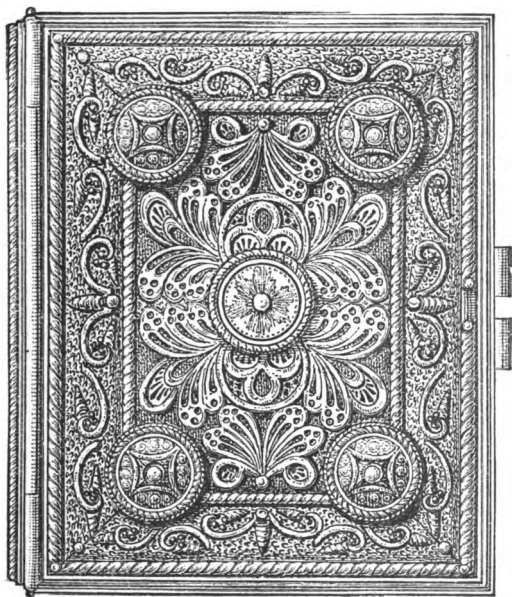


FIG. 13.

of color which characterize the best works of the best workmen of the French school—old and new. The silver filigree covers which have been sometimes put on books ever since the fifteenth century—like the little prayer-book formerly belonging to Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, of which Fig. 13 is a reproduction—are harsh and hard

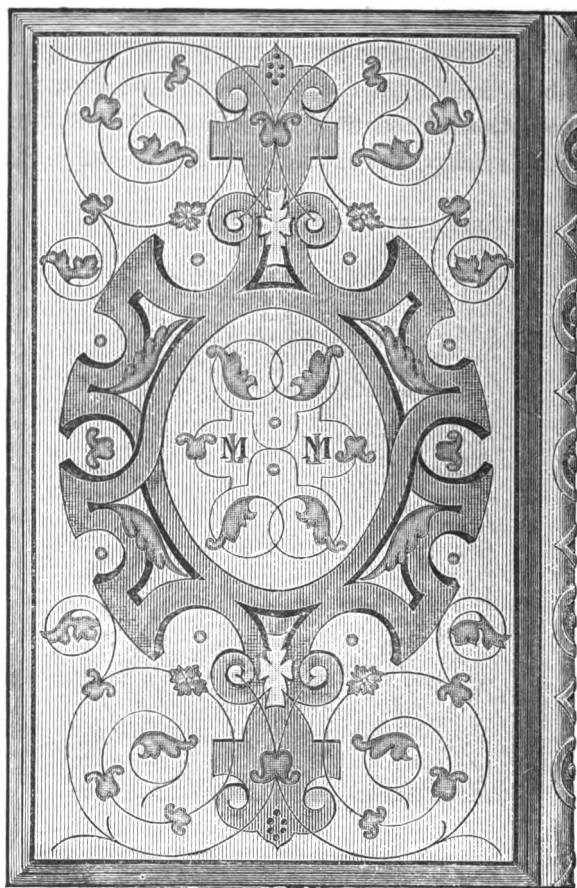


FIG. 14.

when compared with the finer and more appropriate leather bindings of later French artists. Here, for example, is a copy of Euripides bound for Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent, and bearing his monogram (Fig. 14).

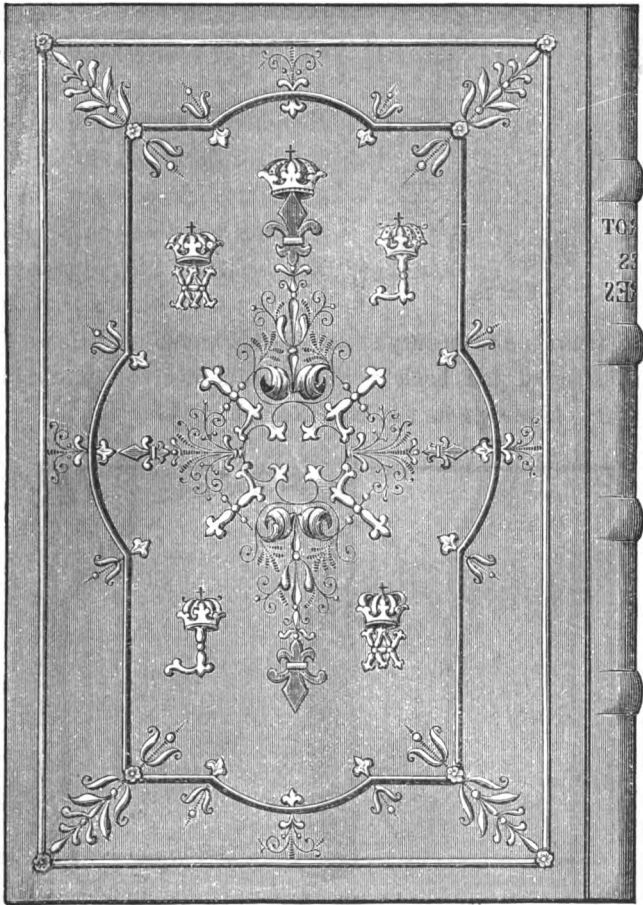


FIG. 15.

Here, again, is a French binding of the seventeenth century (Fig. 15), ornamented with the initials of Anne of Austria and Louis XIII, to whom it belonged. Those

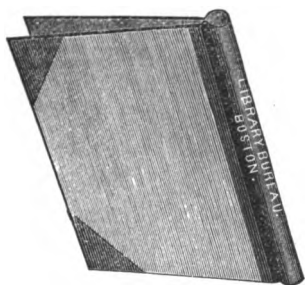


FIG. 16.

who seek further information may be recommended to "The Art of Book-binding," by Mr. Joseph W. Zaehnsdorf (London, 1880); in which all the mechanical processes of binding are described at length. Mr. Zaehnsdorf is an eminent English book-binder, but he

understands the beauty of the best French work, and he has adorned his book with reproductions of admirable modern bindings in the best French style.

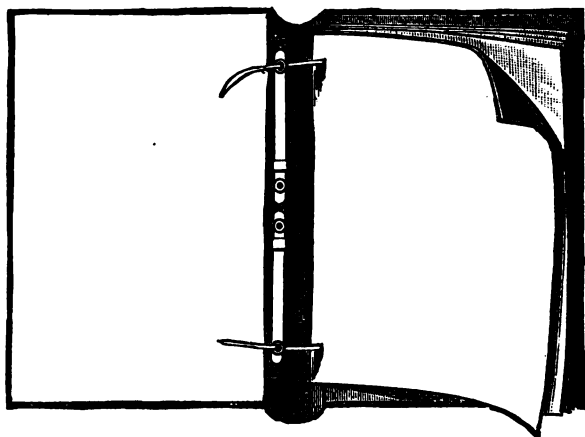


FIG. 17.

Among the best temporary binders are two made by the Library Bureau (Figs. 16 and 17); the former is perhaps better than the latter, as it does not demand a piercing of the pamphlet.

VII.

ON THE MAKING OF SCRAP-BOOKS.

THE usefulness of a well-kept scrap-book was never disputed by any man who has acquired the knack of making one. The making of a scrap-book, however, is an art, and it does not come by nature like those simpler accomplishments, reading and writing. There are almost as many who make a false start and then give up the scrap-book as there are who attempt the keeping of a journal, or diary, and the failure is in both cases generally due to the one error—a too ambitious beginning, or at least a beginning on a plan out of proportion to the needs of the maker. In fact, just as one man may have the opportunity, the leisure, and the temperament to write an elaborate and interesting journal, while another man must needs content himself with the briefest and most condensed entries in a tiny diary, so one man may have the desire and the use for an extensive and carefully classified and indexed scrap-book, while another merely wants a volume in which he may place his chance clippings from the newspaper, and to which he may turn in an idle hour on a holiday afternoon.

What kind of a scrap-book a man may want depends,

first, on whether he is going to make any use of it, and, secondly, on what use he is going to make of it. President Garfield had most extensive scrap-books, and the effectiveness of many of his speeches in Congress and on the stump was due to his adroit handling of facts and figures treasured up for him in these garnerers of unconsidered trifles. Mr. Charles Reade has a collection of scrap-books almost as extensive (as he has himself described to us in his "A Terrible Temptation," one of the few novels in which the novelist has made himself a chief character), and it is from these store-houses of miscellaneous information that he draws the facts on which his stories are founded, and often even their actual incidents. Two of the foremost descriptive journalists of our time—Mr. George T. Lanigan, in the United States, and Mr. George Augustus Sala, in England—have perfected a system of combined note-book, commonplace book, and scrap-book, which enables them to put their hands instantly on every fact, figure, quotation, or illustrative anecdote which they have stored away for future use. It is a long way from such a scrap-book as this to the simple blank-book in which a child pastes the picture-cards now thrust into her hands on every side.

The first thing to be decided is whether your scrap-book is to be a mere toy to fill a few moments of idleness, or whether it is to be useful as well as interesting. The decision of this question is of primary importance, for on it turns the existence of the actual scrap-book. In other words, if a scrap-book is to be really useful, it must cease to be a mere scrap-book, and become something more and

better than a series of blank pages pasted over with a miscellany of prose and verse.

For the child who wants only a pretty picture-book ; and for the woman who wants only a medley of sentimental verse, and domestic recipes, culinary and medicinal, cut from the village newspaper ; and for the man who wants only the bit of dialect doggerel, the good hunting-story, and the odds and ends of paragraphic humor—there is no scrap-book so good as the one which bears the name of “Mark Twain.” As everybody knows, or ought to know, this is a volume the pages of which are printed with a gridiron of prepared glue, so that all that is needed is to moisten the scrap slightly and press it down on its place on the page, and there it will stick (Fig. 18). The use of Mark Twain’s patent scrap-book, or of the somewhat similar and

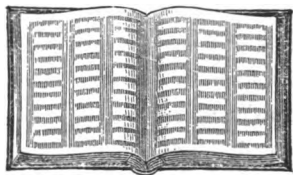


FIG. 18.

so-called “Art Scrap-books” (in which the whole page is slightly covered with an adhesive preparation), or of the wafer scrap-books (at the end of which there are perforated squares of paper gummed on both sides, and these, when detached and moistened, serve as wafers to hold the scrap to the page)—the use of any one of these scrap-books does away with the mucilage-bottle and the paste-pot and their accompanying evils and odors ; and this is a great boon, as any one will acknowledge who has seen an active and intelligent child, in the pursuit of art, upset a large bottle of mucilage three times in one day,

on the same Persian rug. The Mark Twain scrap-books are also to be recommended as having an index. It is advisable, however, to let the book be its own index as far as possible. Even in as rudimentary a collection of scraps as has been indicated above, it is better to attempt some sort of classification. Let the sentimental stanzas cease to elbow on the same page the recipe for taking grease out of a rag carpet. Give a page to poetry, the next to cooking recipes, a third to suggestions for family doctoring, and so on. Then, when a page is filled, turn to the next blank page and begin on that, noting at the top the number of the nearest preceding page devoted to the same subject, and at the bottom the number of the page next following on the same subject. Thus, if a young lady is interested in poetry and canary birds and cooking, the first, fourth, fifth, eighth, and tenth pages might be devoted to the Muse, the second and sixth to canaries, and the third, seventh, ninth, and eleventh to cooking. The eighth page, for instance, would have a 5 written at the top of its first column, and a 10 at the bottom of its last column.

For any one, however, who wants a scrap-book to be of real use, none of these scrap-books will do. To enable a man to collect a great variety of cuttings and notes on a given subject, to be able to lay every scrap on any topic under his eyes all at once, the pasting of the clippings into a book must be given up. If you paste, your matter is both fixed and scattered; it is fixed on the page so that you can not set, one after the other, two scraps acquired at different times, and it is scattered, since the scraps on one

subject are pasted on many pages which are rarely in sequence. What is wanted is a scrap-book arranged to contain together all the scraps on any one subject, however many or however few they may be, and to give room for an indefinite number of subjects. And the "Utility Scrap-book" just fills this want. It is a stout volume containing twenty-six alphabetized pages, on each of which are five pockets labeled with the five vowels. There are thus pages for every initial letter, and pockets for every vowel, and every cutting and note is classified by the initial two letters of its subject. Thus, an anecdote of Napoleon would go on page N, in pocket A, and the account of a curious experiment in electricity on page E, in pocket E. This Utility Scrap-book is at once the simplest and the most comprehensive device for the use of those who wish to collect occasional cuttings, and who are not likely to have a very large collection on any one subject. It would be improved by the addition of two or three extra pages, with ten or fifteen more pockets, to be labeled by each owner to suit his own individual fancies.

If, however, you do not wish a book for general scraps, but only for certain special subjects in which you are deeply interested, then perhaps the Utility Scrap-book is not so good as "Breed's Portfolio Scrap-book" (Fig. 19). This is nothing more nor less than fifty strong manila paper envelopes (15×23 centimetres, 6×9 inches) bound into a book. The pockets are paged; and there is an alphabetical index in front. Breed's Portfolio Scrap-book is better suited to many persons than any other. There are few people who are interested in more than fifty subjects,

or who are interested in subjects likely to need divisions into fifty pockets. It is more comely in shape than the

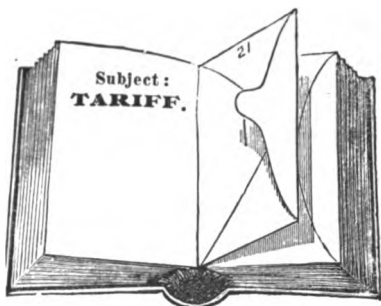


FIG. 19.

“Utility,” or indeed than any other form of scrap-book; and it can take its place readily on the book-shelf by the side of the Unabridged. Both the Utility Scrap-book and Breed’s Portfolio Scrap-book can be procured from the Library Bu-

reau, Boston, or its branches in other cities, the headquarters for all library interests, and the dealers in numberless devices to save the time, labor, and money of literary workers.

It is from the Library Bureau that we get the very best possible apparatus for preserving in order all sorts of newspaper cuttings and MS. notes. This is the “Library Bureau Scrap-box” (L. B. = Library Bureau), which is at once a scrap-book capable of indefinite expansion, a classified commonplace book, and an *Index Rerum* arranged by every man to suit himself, with no waste of space on subjects which do not interest him. The L. B. Scrap-box is a heavy case as wide as a heavy manila envelope, and long enough to contain a hundred of them. Every envelope can be labeled with the name of a special subject, and the envelopes can be arranged alphabetically down the case. A glance at the backs of the envelopes

shows the one in which is to go any special scrap, either cutting or MS. note. The clippings may be classified by any system, and the system itself may be changed at any instant with the slightest expenditure of time and trouble. There is no need to fill more of the hundred paper pockets than you need ; and, on the other hand, it is possible to have as many hundred as you wish. At any moment the cuttings and notes and quotations and references, on any subject, may be subdivided, if you see fit, and re-arranged indefinitely ; and if you want to bear away to the country for steady study what you have gathered on a given topic, you may take out the envelope or envelopes containing what you wish without disturbing the other envelopes, and without ever being at a loss as to how to replace them in the box.

It serves another end also : by allotting twelve envelopes to the months of the year, it is possible to accumulate, and to have at hand, on the first of each month, notes of all engagements, and of all other matters requiring attention during the month ; and these notes may be made even a year ahead, and yet at once take their place in the proper envelope. In this way a constantly renewed annual memorandum of yearly and monthly obligations may be kept with the minimum of mental labor. It is not likely that, with a self-regulating reminder like this, a man would forget to renew his insurance, to pay his pew-rent, or to send his annual contribution for giving poor children a few hours of fresh air. While this L. B. Scrap-box is undoubtedly the best thing for the ready writer, the journalist, the lawyer, the clergyman, and literary workers

of all sorts and conditions, it is, perhaps, too elaborate and too costly for others of less literary tastes and necessities. For these, one of the devices described in the beginning of this paper may be more serviceable. And here occasion serves to say that very few people know how to do a thing seemingly very simple—how to cut a scrap from a newspaper.

In most papers the columns are divided one from another by light black lines called rules, and the succeeding articles are separated by short dashes. Now, it very greatly adds to the appearance of the clipping if it is surrounded by the lines on each side, and by the briefer lines at the top and bottom; it is then framed in light lines. Then every cutting should be dated and marked with the name of the newspaper from which it is taken. The ordinary way of doing this is to write the name and date across the scrap, either in ink or with a colored pencil. But a far better way is to cut both from the paper itself. At the head of the editorial page of nearly all papers, at the top, or near the top, of the chief inside page, you will find the name of the paper, with the date on the line below. Clip this out neatly, leaving the rule on the one side, where there is a rule, and paste it above the cutting you wish to preserve and identify—for which purpose you should leave the lower edge half or three quarters of an inch too long, in order that the scrap may be pasted on just below the name and date. In attaching the clipping to the scrap-book, you will often find that the mucilage or other paste moistens the thin bit of newspaper, and so saturates it that it is difficult to read the

print. This, however, is easily avoided by not applying the paste directly to the scrap itself, but only to flaps left at the top and bottom and folded under.

This arrangement has the additional advantage that, as the scrap is not itself pasted on the page of the scrap-book, but only held in place by hinges at the top and bottom, it is always possible to detach it, whenever desirable, without soaking it off or cutting the page. It can at any time be restored to its place by pasting on a new pair of folded hinges above and below.

Before finally leaving the subject of scrap-books, a further suggestion may be in order. All who write for a living, or for amusement, or for any other good and sufficient reason, ought to keep every scrap of their own writing. Nothing is more beneficial to a young writer than the power of easily comparing his past work with his present. The preservation in regular chronological order on the pages of a scrap-book, or series of scrap-books, of all that a man has written may be of inestimable advantage to him. A scrutiny of these pages may reveal little tricks of style hitherto unsuspected, the undue repetition of favorite words and other kindred blemishes, to be corrected readily as soon as detected. And the possession of all a man's own work gives him the instant use of the results of all his past investigation and industry. The few minutes' time taken to cut out the articles and paste them on the pages of a scrap-book will be saved half a dozen times over by the ownership of a scrap-book filled with one's own work.

It is well, also, for all those who are interested in any

club, society, or association—artistic, literary, charitable, or social—to start a scrap-book to contain all printed matter of interest to the association, all notes of invitation, bills of fare of entertainments, orders of dancing, programmes, ballots, newspaper reports, circulars, statements, catalogues, and what not. Such things are most evanescent. They are here to-day and gone to-morrow. Once misplaced, they can not be replaced. Yet their value to those interested in the club or society, and in its origin and history, is incalculable.

For those who may hereafter begin to arrange clippings and notes, probably no system is as good as that devised and elaborated by Mr. Melvil Dui, formerly of Amherst College; and even those who have already arranged their accumulations according to plans of their own will do well to consider carefully whether the Dui classification and subject index is not better than their own imperfect attempt.

“The problem,” as it has been well said, “is to know just where to put each item (books, pamphlets, clippings, or notes are understood to be treated in the same way) with a certainty that other items on the same subject will be assigned to the same place. If this is possible, the other necessity of a satisfactory scheme must follow, and, whenever matter is wanted on any subject, it may be found at once.

“The plan must also be so simple that a child can understand it, and so quickly applicable that the busiest man may have time for it. Few people can afford time to master any classification of human knowledge; nor

can those who most need such aid spend much time in assigning matter to its proper class, or in finding it again when wanted.

“Such a system would be simply invaluable to all literary people ; and such a system has been devised, and, after thorough trial for several years, is now published. It is no longer an experiment, as many libraries and individuals have proved its value by actual use, and have given the most flattering testimonials of its practical character. At the International Conferences of Librarians, in Philadelphia in 1876, and in London in 1877, the plan received hearty indorsement ; and the U. S. Bureau of Education printed a full description, as Chapter XXVIII of its Special Report on Libraries.

“The plan is briefly this : All subjects that could be collated from catalogues, dictionaries, etc., were grouped in one alphabet of several thousand headings. This is printed on a triple-column page, and each word is followed by a simple number of three figures ; e. g., the word ‘Protection’ by 337. Had we chosen Free-Trade, Duties, Customs, Tariffs, or any other word with similar meaning, we should have found it in its alphabetical place followed by the same 337. This number means Class 3, SOCIOLOGY. Division 3, POLITICAL ECONOMY, Section 7, *Protection and Free-Trade*.

“All knowledge is divided into nine great classes, numbered by the digits. Each class is separated into divisions numbered with a second figure ; each division has nine sections bearing a third figure. When and where desired, the sections may be subdivided to any extent with-

out confusion. The system of classification being largely mnemonic, is more easily remembered than any other yet made public, and is said, by those who have tried it, to have great merits in itself. It was developed during two years of trial by the Faculty of Amherst College. Each professor had in charge his own special subject, and much outside aid was called in before final publication."

VIII.

ON DIARIES AND FAMILY RECORDS.

“OH, that I had had time and patience to keep a diary!” declares the late Charles James Mathews, in the first chapter of that beginning of an autobiography which the present Mr. Charles Dickens edited and completed in 1879. “What a world of trouble it would have saved me, and what endless odd details and incidents, now forgotten, I should have been able to record! Harley kept one for some forty years. I have seen three volumes, all regularly bound and lettered. They contain a most interesting account of what he had for dinner each day, and what he paid for coach-hire, and not a word of anything else. I doubt whether their publication would interest the public of the present day. I find that I, too, commenced a journal regularly on the first of January every year, and invariably broke down after a few weeks; then resumed, and finally dropped it altogether. My intentions were good, but my perseverance faulty.”

In Charles Mathews and in Harley, two old actors, we have the exact opposites of Fanny Kemble. Mathews began a journal annually, and always gave it up. Harley kept a diary with unbroken regularity, and never recorded in it anything worthy of record. Mrs. Kemble, who be-

gan her public life in the theatre as they did—the very same theatre, too—started a journal early in life, and has made a voluminous appearance in literature on the strength of it. Omitting her plays and poems, and her latest book of Shakespearean criticism, all of Mrs. Kemble's books are made out of her journals, or out of the letters which were a substitute for them. First came the "Journal of a Residence in America"; then "A Year of Consolation," which was a transcript from a journal kept during a journey to Italy; then again the "Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation"; and last of all come the two charming volumes of "Records of a Girlhood" and "Records of Later Years." But we need not come down to modern times for examples. Pepys lives in literature solely because he kept a diary. The journals of Dangeau and the Duke of Luynes are the great sources of information as to the court life of the later French kings. And the diary of Judge Sewell sheds a light on the thoughts and feelings of our New England ancestors not elsewhere to be found so fully focused.

It is, however, because most people want to imitate Pepys and Sewell, not to mention Mrs. Kemble and Charles Greville, that most people break down and give up their journals in the first few months, if not weeks, after the fair start has been had. Most people have not the opportunities of Sewell or Greville; most people lead quiet lives and mix little with the great ones of the world, and have but little to record out of the way or important. Yet every man's life is of importance to him and to his; and every man, woman, and child should keep

a brief record of his or her own doings and sayings. Only one must not attempt too much—and one must begin right. Charles Mathews failed because, characteristically enough, he made a great flourish at the outset. Harley failed as dismally, because, although he kept on heroically, he never set down what was really important, even to him. A country school-teacher, leading a humdrum life in a little village, does not need a diary large enough to set down the doings of court and king ; but she will probably find much pleasure in jotting down a brief record of her daily life. And it is to suggest how this brief record may best be written with the least expenditure of time and trouble and money, and with the utmost benefit in result, that these pages are written.

It is not necessary to buy a diary. Any blank-book will do. The date can be written at the head of each day's entry. This has the advantage of allowing a long and elaborate entry whenever anything happens to demand it. But, wherever it is convenient, it is best to buy a diary regularly laid off, with dates properly printed, and a space for each and every date. There is something in the assured and stable look of a well-arranged blank diary which sustains the beginner in the task of keeping it up. The word "beginner" is used here advisedly, for it is only the beginner who needs aid and encouragement. No one who has kept a diary through a year ever needs help to keep at it the next year and the year after. The habit once formed, it is really easier to keep a diary than not. This, of course, is on the supposition that the diary is what has been suggested—a brief record. Indeed, the record can hardly be

too brief. I have seen a diary full of interesting personal details, the page of which was not larger than two inches by three, and each page contained the record of a full week of seven days. This, however, is a little too small. Perhaps the best size for a beginner has a page about four inches high and three inches broad, and gives two pages (facing each other) to a week—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday on one page, and Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on the opposite page ; this allows a double space for Sunday, which is often a great advantage. In such a diary there is a space, three inches long and a little more than an inch high, for every week-day. And such a space, small as it may seem when we recall Pepys and the Duke of Luynes and Greville, is ample to set down the simple happenings of most men's lives.

Now as to the things to be set down. Bearing in mind the fact that the diary is to be a brief record, the first question to be considered is—"What happenings in your life are worth recording?" And the answer to this varies with the individual. Every man, woman, and child must determine for himself or herself what he or she deems of most importance. A few general suggestions may be made. Most people take an interest in the weather ; it may be well, therefore, to note first the extreme of temperature with the general state of the weather. In January, the record might read: "6°, clear, with a bitter wind;" and in July it might be, "87°, and very muggy ; no breeze." Next, it is advisable to specify all visits paid or received, and all letters written and read. Then it is a good thing to record any special payment of money and any change in

health. Lastly, *always* make note of the books you read, setting down the day you began and the day you finished.

Perhaps it is always best to teach by example rather than precept. Here are a few specimen entries :

JANUARY 1st, 1883, Monday.

36°, slight snow-storm. Went to Newsboys' Lodging-House. Sent \$50 ck. to Children's Aid Society. Made eleven calls. Dined with father.

Read Stedman's "Poe."

That, of course, is the record of a gentleman's New Year's day. Here is a young lady's entry later in the year :

APRIL 13th, 1883, Friday.

51°, disagreeable wind. Caught slight cold. Called on Dr. From Mary, to her. Mrs. Brown called.

Began Aldrich's "Story of Bad Boy."

The words "from Mary, to her," mean, of course, that a letter was received and answered. Obviously there are days when the record is brief to the point of attenuity, and there are others when of necessity it must be full and ample. When a lady is going to Europe, the entry of any day on shipboard might be very short indeed. But, on her arrival in Paris, it may spread to an alarming length :

JUNE 30th, 1883, Wednesday.

On board S. S. "Gallia." Run 343. Head winds. Heavy rain. Quite sea-sick. In berth all day.

Tried to read Trollope's "Eye for an Eye."

JULY 16th, 1883, Monday.

Paris. Continental Hotel. Warm and clear. From Mother and Mary. To Father and John. Mr. Whyte and Mr. Blacque

called. Went to Cluny Museum and the Bon Marché. Tried on at Worth's. Dined at the Lion d'Or. Saw Coquelin in "l'Aventurière," at the Théâtre-Français. Headache went away.

Then, soon after the return to America, would come Thanksgiving and Christmas, and the entries might be like these :

NOVEMBER 29th, 1883, Thursday.

45°, clear. Thanksgiving. Church in morning. Text: "The greatest of these is charity." From Messrs. Green and Gray. Wrote renewing insurance policy. Dined with grandfather.

DECEMBER 25th, 1883, Tuesday.

6°, very cold. Bitter wind. No church. Rheumatism in arm. My letter denouncing co-education printed in "Herald." Father and grandfather dined with us. Reread "Vignettes in Rhyme."

A diary with memorandums as concise as these is no tax on the time. As it can be written in a minute every night on going to bed, it is no tax on the memory. It costs neither time nor trouble nor money. It may save all three. After keeping one for more than ten years, the present writer can testify to the great advantage he has derived from this brief record, and he takes pleasure in advising others to go and do likewise.

Most of the ordinary diaries offered for sale at the stationers' every year have extra pages for special memorandums, and for brief entries of moneys paid in and paid out. These latter are just what is needed for the keeping of any little private account—the amount of money spent in schooling and school-books, or the amount received from the little attempt at putting up preserves and pickles.

It is a good habit to keep the run of the exact receipts and expenditures of all such "side issues"; and the keeping of an exact account is often the means of opening one's eyes to the altogether unexpected amount of money paid in and paid out.

Next in importance to the individual diary or journal is the family record. And it is but little more trouble to keep, while its interest is far more extensive, as it includes the whole family in all its branches and roots and ramifications—and not one member alone.

"The family Bibles of past generations," Mr. Francis Galton has said in an English review, "served as registers of family events. Births, illness, marriages, and deaths were chronicled on their fly-leaves, and those ponderous tomes fulfilled an important function in this incidental way. But they are now becoming generally replaced by more handy volumes, and the family register is disappearing with the old family Bible." Mr. Galton goes on to make a plea for an improved substitute for the fly-leaves usually found between the Old and New Testaments. As a special student of sociology, he knows the high importance to science of exact family records. The substitute which he wishes to see adopted generally is at once too costly and too complicated to be attempted by many. He notes that the disappearance of the family Bible almost exactly coincides with the invention of photography, and with the recognition of "the hereditary value of what are called life histories"; and he then suggests that the present seems "to be an appropriate time to advocate the es-

establishment of a new form of family register that shall contain all those notices that were formerly entered in the family Bible, and much more besides ; namely, a series of photographic studies of the features from childhood upward, together with facts that shall afford as complete a life history as is consistent with brevity. What is desired is something of this sort. In each substantial family we should find a thin quarto volume, solidly bound, having leaves of stout paper, on which photographs may be mounted. Each pair of opposite pages would be headed by the name of some member of the family. A double row of photographs would run down the side of each page, each about half as large again as a postage stamp, the one containing a medallion of the full face and the other one of the profile. Opposite to each of these the events of the corresponding period would be chronicled. Every opening of the book would contain the photographs and events of about ten periods, five to each page, and would include from ten to twenty years of life history."

Surely this suggestion, or some simplification of it, is worthy of adoption in American families, for in this country the young are constantly breaking away from the old homestead and striking out for themselves, and even whole families not infrequently make a complete transfer from the East to the West. Nowhere is there so much difficulty and confusion in gathering up the threads of family history as there is here. Nowhere, again, is there a greater desire to get together the family records and to trace up the family pedigree. Consider how much false pride would be spared if every family knew exactly from whom

it was directly descended, and if it was made sure it had no right to shelter itself under some aristocratic family tree. Consider, again, how much bitter regret and vexation of spirit might be saved to many a man and woman if he had the facts of his family history so plainly before him that he could not be misled by any alluring belief in a visionary claim on a family fortune of untold millions awaiting a claimant from across the water.

Some sort of family record should be kept in every household. There will never be a better time. Mr. Galton's plan requires, at the beginning, nothing more than the purchase of a stout blank-book and the ruling of a few lines; or, if even this is too much trouble, recourse may be had to the more elaborate "Family Record Album," containing a comprehensive system of blanks classified on a new plan. It has family pages for the names of the members of the family. It has genealogical pages for the descent of the family as far as it can be traced in a direct line. It has tabular pages, one for each person, for the setting down of all the leading particulars of his or her birth—parentage, time and place of birth, weight and height at birth and at various times, dates of vaccination, naming, walking, talking, learning to read, write, swim, etc., going to school or college, entering on trade, business or profession, marriage, residences, diseases, accidents, travels, and deaths. It has biographical pages for other special and personal details. It has heirloom pages, on which to keep the record of the interesting things about the house, and of their history, in so far as they have any. It has domestic-economy pages for the record of the man-

ner of living, house-rent, expenditure and income, etc., from year to year. It has travel pages to record the incidents and dates of any sojourn away from home of any member of the family, and it has miscellaneous pages for all the other manifold things to be thought of.

But whether or not any formal family record be kept, there should certainly be begun a family scrap-book. This will agreeably supplement the family record, if there is one. By a family scrap-book is meant a book devoted solely to the collection of those printed paragraphs in which the name of the family appears, first of all in importance being the marriages and deaths; and, if there is an English branch, there may also be birth notices to insert. Then there are the chance newspaper paragraphs announcing the taking of a prize at the county fair; the description of the fire which burnt half the house, and the report of the decision of the Supreme Court in that everlasting lawsuit. These go in, side by side, with the inaccurate paragraph on your neat after-dinner speech, and the other on your wife's table at the church fair. And a place should also be found for the few lines which remark on your son's departure from the village to enter college, and also for the straggling verses he sent home shortly after for insertion in the "Poet's Corner" of the local newspaper. If you travel by water, some paper is likely to print a list of the passengers, and this deserves its place on the pages of the family scrap-book.

IX.

ON THE LENDING AND MARKING OF BOOKS.

"To lend or not to lend" is the first question which the book-lover has to propound to himself, and for which he seeks vainly an answer. If he does not lend the book which another needs and can not easily get elsewhere, he is a dog in the manger. If he does lend, and the precious tome never more returns—why, the fool and his book are soon parted. If he tries to get wisdom by consulting the records of the past, he soon gets confusion only. Some great men and many little men have lent their books freely and frequently. Most of the great book-lovers—those who adore books as books—have rigidly refused to part with any of the volumes from their treasure-houses, guarding them as jealously as the Turk his harem ; some have even gone to the extreme of letting no profane eye fall within the sacred depths of the book-case. Carlyle was one of the great men of our scribbling century, and he was free with his books. When Dickens wanted to get up the facts for the framework of "A Tale of Two Cities," he consulted Carlyle as to the chief books he should read to master the feeling and the sayings and doings of the period. While he was expecting an answer, a cart drove up before his house, full of books about the

French Revolution; and Carlyle had sent it. Instead of giving Dickens what he asked—the names of the books—he lent him the books themselves. To go farther back into history, there was once a German who was so fond of books that he had his book-plate designed by no less an artist than Albert Dürer; yet he also loved his fellow-man, for this very book-plate bore the motto, “*Sibi et Amicis*”—“for himself and his friends.” And the great Grolier himself, whose taste in binding has caused his books to be sought for diligently, and treasured up, marked their sides with the kindred motto, “*Io. Grolierii et amicorum*,” denoting that they were the property of Grolier and of his friends. No man, it may be noted, has yet arisen wise enough to love books for their own sake and yet liberal enough to declare them at the service of his enemies as well as of his friends. The nearest approach to this is to be seen on the book-plate of one Christian Charles de Savigny, who thereon sets forth that his books are not for himself but for others—“*non mihi sed aliis*.” And, in his delightful little book about the library, Mr. Andrew Lang aptly translates the declaration of Panurge, that “it would prove much more easy in nature to have fish entertained in the air, and bullocks fed in the bottom of the ocean, than to support or tolerate a rascally rabble of people that will not lend.” Perhaps it is not difficult to detect behind Panurge the broad face of Rabelais himself, an omnivorous reader, declaiming against this sin.

But the records of history are like the law reports: if you search diligently you can generally find a case on

the other side. On this subject there is no need of seeking long. The man who dislikes and absolutely refuses to lend his books has never hidden his light under a bushel ; indeed, he has been wont to noise his vice abroad. It was the learned Scaliger who quoted Scripture as glibly as that other scholarly gentleman, Mephistopheles, and adorned his book-plate with a text from the Vulgate, "Ite ad vendentes"—"Go rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves" (Matt. xxv, 9). And another and like-minded book-owner searched the Scriptures also and marked his books with the text, "The ungodly borroweth and payeth not again" (Psalms xxxvii, 21). Pixéri-court, a chief purveyor of coarse melodrama to the minor theatres of Paris, and also a chief collector of fine books and bindings, posted over the door of his library a couplet written for him by another dramatist and book-lover, Charles Nodier :

"Tel est le sort de tout livre prêté ;
Souvent il est perdu, toujours il est gâté."

And Condorcet composed for himself a little sextain, not unlike the above. It is an address to his beloved books :

"Chères delices de mon âme,
Gardez-vous bien de me quitter
Quoiqu'on vienne vous emprunter.
Chacun de vous m'est une femme
Qui peut se laisser voir sans blâme
Et ne se doit jamais prêter."

Now, the question comes up again, "To lend or not to lend ?" We find ourselves much in the situation of the

gentleman of color who was sitting under a highly wrought sermon in which the preacher gave his hearers their choice between the straight and narrow path that leads to Destruction and the broad and crooked road that leads to certain Death. "En dat case, dis yer niggah take to de woods !" was the colored gentleman's most sensible observation. And this is very like the advice tendered to us by that original writer, M. Jules Janin, who, after weighing the question carefully, suggests as a middle course that we talk like Grolier and act like Pixéricourt. This, however, is scarcely honest. It is perhaps better to adopt frankly the course suggested by one of the English reviewers of Mr. Lang's book, which was to appeal to the would-be borrower's common sense, telling him that he can get any common book for himself, and that he can not reasonably expect you to lend him an uncommon one.

Here we come to a solution. We are justified surely in refusing to lend a unique volume, or a book in any way difficult to replace. No man has really a right to ask us to lend that copy of Foote's plays with the neat signature of Samuel Johnson on the title; or that copy of the "Théâtre de M. Quinault" with the name of Mlle. Clairon stamped in gold on its dark calf cover; or any missal of the thirteenth century by some monkish hand most delicately wrought.

"Ah! a wondering brotherhood
Doubtless round that artist stood,
Strewing o'er his careful ways
Little choruses of praise

.

"In that growth of day by day,
When to labor was to pray,
Surely something vital passed
To the patient page at last ;

"Something that one still perceives
Vaguely present in the leaves ;
Something from the worker lent,
Something mute—but eloquent ! "

The man who could lend that book to his fellow-man—without a sinister motive—is made of something more than mortal flesh and blood. So is the man who will part with an autograph of Hawthorne or Thackeray, a first edition of Molière, or the Bay Psalm-book. It is too much to ask. But the book of to-day—the book in print, the book of commerce, which can be had anywhere for the asking, and C. O. D.—surely it were churlish to decline to lend this to a friend. Every man, however, is free to frame his own definition of a friend and of true friendship. In my own private dictionary a friend is one who lends me his books or who borrows mine. I keep my own ordinary books open to all. Any man may take one down from the shelves and—permission asked and granted—may take it home with him. There is no denying that now and again one of my books fails to come home to roost. But I prefer this to a selfish denial of the light of literature to some wayfaring friend. And, after all, the number of books I lose is very, very small. The number of books injured is still smaller. And smallest of all is my grief at the loss. For I have considered the situation and deliberately made an allowance for bad debts, charging them off to profit and loss. So I

sleep well, with the easy conscience of a benefactor of humanity.

Yet I have my rules. Even philanthropy may be systematic, indeed ought to be, else it leads to misanthropy. I never lend a book which I can not replace. I never lend a book of reference which I may need myself while it is out. I never lend one volume of a set. I never lend without taking a receipt, signed by the borrower. I never lend a book that I can not afford to lose. I never lend a book to a man whom I know to be untidy, or careless, or inconsiderate; but I give a liberal construction to this regulation. And by means of these rules I am enabled to reconcile my conscience to the individual ownership of books.

That your books may come home to roost, it is well to mark them before they go into the lender's hands. The common practice is to write the name on a front fly-leaf, with the address, and often the date. It is well also to put the date of purchase and the price paid unobtrusively on a corner of one of the final fly-leaves. Public libraries must needs stamp their name on all their books, and on the backs of all the engravings in their books. But private book-lovers need not adopt such stringent measures. The name and address at the beginning and the date and price at the end are sufficient in most cases. Yet it is well to add a secret mark to identify the volume, in case it strays or is stolen, in which event the thief will find no great difficulty in removing the name and address. Of these secret marks, perhaps the best system is that used by Thomas Jefferson.

He turned to the signature J in his books and put a T before it, and to the signature T and put a J after it. He had thus his initials in two places in the book, and where no one would be likely to look for them. A contributor to the admirable "Library Journal" (1879, p. 62) suggests an improvement. He advises not to take a regular signature, which is often troublesome to find and which will differ in books printed by different houses, but to determine on a fixed number by which the number of pages shall always be divided. Thus, if you fix on four, and the volume has a hundred and sixty pages, you put your mark—initials, cross, or what not—on page forty. Each owner can make a rule for himself so simple that he can not forget it.

Instead of writing the name of the owner on the fly-leaf or across the title-page, many prefer a printed label to be affixed to the inner cover of the book. In its simplest form this book-label is little more than

JOHN SMITH,
His Book.

A form a little more elaborate would allow a line for the number of the volume, and perhaps also another blank for the indication of its place on the shelves. It may even be accompanied by a few lines of school-boy doggerel, inveighing against the despoiler :

"He who takes what isn't his'n,
When he's caught he goes to prison."

Or,

“To lose this book would cause me grief:
Whoever takes it is a thief.”

Or, again,

“Steal not this book, for fear of shame:
Here you see the owner’s name.”

Or, more elaborately yet,

“Steal not this book, my honest friend,
For fear the gallows will be your end.
Up the ladder, down the rope,
There you’ll hang until you choke.
Then I’ll come along and say,
‘Where’s that book you stole away?’”

But these typographic book-labels are all rather school-boyish. The true book-lover likes to have an engraved book-plate, drawn specially for his use, and intended solely to honor his books. So many book-lovers have had their book-plates made, and so many artists have designed them, during the past three centuries that there are now collectors of book-plates; nay, more, there are even two guide-books for the collector of book-plates. The French call a book-plate an *ex-libris* (from the books of), and so the first treatise on the topic is the entertaining little book of M. Poulet-Malassis, “*Les Ex-Libris Français, depuis leur origine jusqu’à nos jours*” (Paris, 1874). The second book is by an Englishman; it is Mr. J. Leicester Warren’s “*Guide to the Study of Book-Plates*” (London, 1880). From these works it appears that the earlier form of book-plate was heraldic, and that this form is perhaps still most in favor in England, while in France a freer and more artistic impulse is to be ob-

served. As specimens of the English school may be taken the book-plate of the late J. R. Planché, the his-



FIG. 20.

torian of costume and Rougecroix Pursuivant of Arms (Fig. 20), and the book-plate of the library of Eton College (Fig. 21). Planché carried out the idea of a seal of

wax, even to the representation of the silken cord which sustains and pierces it. The Eton College book-plate is a fair type of the book-plate most in favor in England ; it is rectangular in shape, heraldic in design, and fully let-



FIG. 21.

tered in Latin. Even when the French choose to treat an heraldic subject, they are wont to lighten it and make it more graceful. Here (Fig. 22) is one drawn by Boucher for a French collector of the last century. The owner's



FIG. 22.

name is there, and so are his arms, but so airy and graceful is the touch of the artist that even the heraldic design loses its stiffness and heaviness.

The sketch made by Gavarni for the Goncourt broth-

ers, Edmond and Jules, who were inseparable, living together, eating together, working together, writing together, shows how completely the French have cast off any trace of the heraldic origin of the book-plate. There is a French locution, "*Les deux doigts de la main*"—"the two fingers on the hand"—implying close and fraternal union; and it is this which Gavarni sets before us in his



FIG. 23.

clever sketch (Fig. 23). Still more striking and unconventional is the book-plate of Victor Hugo, designed by M. Aglaüs Bouvenne (Fig. 24). It represents the tower of Notre Dame de Paris, marked with four gigantic letters, H V G O, and illumined by a brilliant flash of lightning on which we can read the legend "*Ex-Libris, Victor Hugo.*" Quite as peculiar, although less characteristic, is

the etching of M. Bracquemond's, which serves as the book-plate of M. Edouard Manet, the impressionist painter. It is an outline bust of M. Manet rising from a pedestal, relieved by a few ferns (Fig. 25).

There are not many American book-plates, although the taste for them is growing rapidly. They will increase in number as the number of book-lovers increases. The only American book-plate which we are at lib-

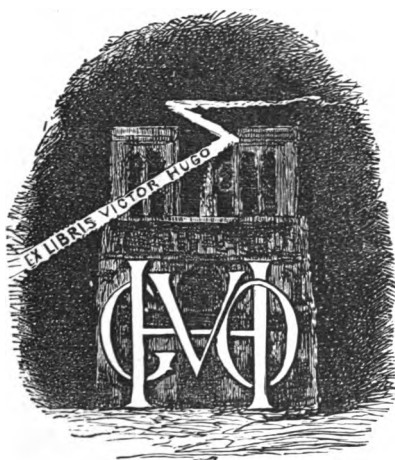


FIG. 24.

MANET



ET MANEBIT

FIG. 25.

erty to reproduce here was drawn by the brilliant American figure painter, Mr. E. A. Abbey, for a collector of dramatic literature, who makes a specialty of the French

stage (Fig. 26). It represents an American Indian finding a Greek comic mask. The legend is from Molière : “Que pensez-vous de cette comédie ?”—“What think you of this comedy ?”



FIG. 26.

X.

HINTS HERE AND THERE.

NEVER cut open the pages of a book or a magazine with anything but a paper-cutter. A finger is too blunt, and tears the edges. A knife is too sharp, and may cut the edges unequally. The best paper-cutter is a thin slip of ivory. Wood and bone are nearly as good. Metal is not.

Never deface books in any way. Never scribble on them needlessly. Never disfigure them with unnecessary stamps, or with stamps in inappropriate places. A good book is a good friend, and should be treated with the respect due to a friend.

Never wet your fingers to turn over a leaf. Be warned by the fate of the king in the Arabian tale. Never turn down a corner of a page to hold your place. Never put in a soiled playing card, or a stained envelope, or a bit of dirty string, or a piece of damp newspaper. Always use a regular book-mark. The simplest, and one of the best, is a card as large as a small visiting card. By cutting this twice longitudinally from one end almost to the other, you will have a three-legged book-mark which rides a-straddle of the page—one leg on the page below and two on the page you wish the book to open at.

Never allow your books to get damp, as they may mildew. Never allow them to get hot, as the boards may warp and the leather may crack. Never put them on a shelf high up near the ceiling of a room lighted by gas, as the results of gas combustion are highly injurious. Never put books with metal clasps or with embossed sides, or albums ornamented with decorative nails, on the shelves



FIG. 27.

by the side of other books, for the delicate bindings of the other books will suffer. Put all such hedgehogs of books in drawers or in trays by themselves.

Never leave books or pamphlets out of sight in drawers for a long time without examination to see that the mice have not made a nest in the drawer out of the margins of the books.

Never bind in one volume a lot of miscellaneous pamphlets on incongruous subjects and of odd sizes. When you can afford it, bind every pamphlet separately. The only exceptions to this rule are serials, annuals, series of reports of one society, etc., which may be bound together whenever a sufficient number have appeared to make a shapely volume. Pamphlets are best kept from dust and in order in pamphlet-cases (Figs. 27 and 28), which are

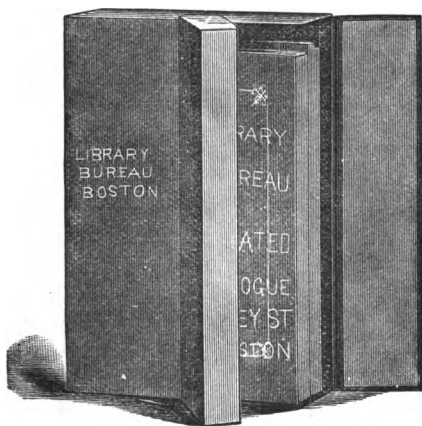


FIG. 28.

paper boxes shaped like a book, and which, like a book, may bear their contents labeled on their backs.

Never let books lean sideways for a long time, as it racks the covers. If the absence of one or more books from a shelf makes it difficult to keep the remaining volumes upright, insert a wooden block in the place of the missing books. It is well to have a supply of ash or walnut blocks resembling in size and shape an octavo volume.

If these are at hand, one of them can be substituted for any book taken down, whether for study or to lend. A

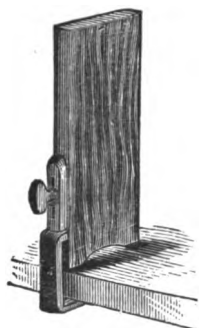


FIG. 29.

little slip of silicated paper glued on one side of this block would enable a record to be kept of the date when the book was taken away, and of the purpose. When there are only a few books on a shelf, the best block to cause these to stand upright is made by sawing diagonally in half a cube of wood six inches every way. The Library Bureau supply a neat clamped support (Fig. 29) for broken rows of books.

The best book-rack for use on the library desk is the Economy Book Support (Figs. 30 and 31), made from a single piece of tinned iron. It is firm and strong, and a

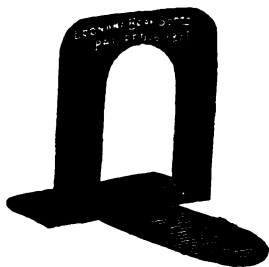


FIG. 30.



FIG. 31.

pair of them will support the ends of a row of books of any length. The Harvard Book-rack (Fig. 32) is practically the same in principle; its sides are of wood neatly carved, and they fit into flat metal arms which pass under

the row of volumes like the tongue of the Economy Book Support.

Never attempt to classify books on your shelves by the colors of the bindings or by the sizes of the books themselves. Put the works of an author together, as far as possible, however incongruous their sizes may be. And try to keep books on the same and kindred subjects as close together as may be convenient. If possible, divide your books roughly into as many classes as you have book-cases, and give up one book-case, or section of a book-case, to each subject. This will greatly facilitate your finding at once

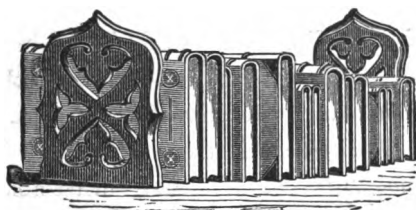


FIG. 32.

any book you need in a hurry. This classification of books should not be too rigid ; it ought to be simple and general, and fitted for the individual owner.

When a hundred books are gathered together, then ought there to be a catalogue. The simplest form of catalogue is a little pocket address-book, with a marginal alphabetical index, in which are put down the titles of the books under the name of the author. For small collections this will serve. It is best, however, to enter every book at least twice—once under the title, and again under the author's name. If you have more than two or three

hundred books, don't attempt to catalogue them before you have learned how to do it. For cataloguing is not as easy as it looks at first sight. Ample information on the subject can be had in the Library Report made by the Bureau of Education in 1876. Or application may be made to the associated librarians who manage the Library Bureau, 32 Hawley Street, Boston. The rules for cataloguing laid down by the American Library Association will be found in the "Library Journal" (vol. iii, page 12), and ought to be consulted by every one who has occasion to make a catalogue for home or for a society library, however small.

Books which children can read should be put on the lower shelves of the book-case, so that the children may be tempted to take them down for themselves and have a try at their contents. These books within a child's reach need not be "juvenile," and indeed had better not be. They ought to be travels and biographies, brightly written and full of pictures. Especially should the file of "Harper's Magazine" or "The Century" stand where the young ones may readily get at it. On the other hand, books which children should not handle should not be within reach of their hands. Lead not the little ones into temptation. Lock up your Rabelais, and perhaps even your Fielding, where little fingers may not happen on them. Put the Elizabethan dramatists and the comic writers of the Restoration where no Paul Pry, Jr., or his sister, may chance to spy them. Out of sight out of mind.

All books need air, as we have elsewhere said. The

doors of all closed book-cases should be opened now and then, every few days, to let in the light and to change the air. Books are no more benefited by solitary confinement than are men. All books get dusty. Every shelf should be cleaned out once in six months, every book being dusted and returned to its place. The best duster for fine bindings is a bit of soft chamois leather.

Every book should carry its own history. It is well to note the price paid for it, the place where it was bought, and the date when it was purchased. This can best be done with a hard pencil in a corner of the back fly-leaf. If bought at auction, note also the number it bore in the sale catalogue.

It is best not to cover the books of a library with paper. As Mr. William F. Poole puts it, "the covering is expensive, troublesome, and quite as much an injury as a protection to a book. A book covered with paper is likely to need rebinding sooner than if it be not covered." A room full of books covered with paper is dull and monotonous; and no one who has ever glanced into such a room will be inclined to disagree with Mr. Poole when he says that "books lose their individuality by being covered." This is not only an æsthetic disadvantage; it also reduces the usefulness of the books, as they are less easily handled and kept apart and in order. However, it may be well to cover children's school-books, but with muslin, not paper.

Letters not destroyed at once ought to be filed at once. Indorse on every letter as soon as read the date of receipt. Indorse also, as soon as answered, the date of an-

swer. One of the best letter files is the Economy Reference File (Fig. 33), which consists of a series of indexed manila paper pockets, guarded from dust by a box. The

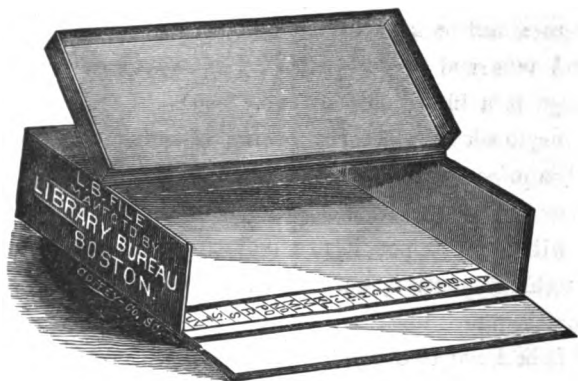


FIG. 33.

letters arranged in these alphabetical pockets can be found readily, taken out at will, and put back into their place without trouble or delay.

Every library-table or desk should be supplied with the four chief aids to the ready writer—shears, paste, pins, and rubber bands. It is policy to buy good steel bankers' shears, with long blades, nickel-plated. As Mr. Melvil Dui says, cutting paper with common shears is like trout-fishing with a walking-stick. Probably the best paste for ordinary workers is made from gum tragacanth. Dissolve one or two ounces in an open vessel, with cold water, and it will be ready for use in a few hours. As it evaporates, more cold water may be added. It rarely turns

sour. The pyramid of pins is the most convenient shape in which to have pins on a desk or in a drawer. For binding together papers on the same subject, a bundle of letters, or pages of manuscript, the Gem Paper-Fasteners, or McGill's Paper-Fasteners, are better than ordinary pins. India-rubber bands ought to be on every desk in a little tin box, with divisions to hold the assorted sizes.

If you ever have occasion to inclose a stamp for a reply to a letter, do not stick it to the paper by a corner. Cut two slits in your note paper thus _____, and slide the stamp through both cuts. It will remain there, and not drop out. In most cases, however, it is best to inclose an envelope, stamped and directed.

If the drawers of your desk stick or slide hard, a little rub with tallow, soap, or lard will often remove the difficulty.

Ink-stains on the fingers can generally be removed by rubbing with pumice-stone. The stains of aniline ink, now very common, may be washed out by using a mixture of alcohol 3 parts and glycerine 1 part.

Several pages of useful receipts for the removal of spots and stains in books, for the renovation of old binding, and for similar needs, may be found in Mr. Power's "Handy Book about Books."

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Arnold, Matthew [1822-].

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